



FIRTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2019-2030

Prepared for:

Village of Firth

Firth, Nebraska

August 6, 2019

olsson



RURAL PLANNING

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	American Community Survey
ETJ	Extraterritorial Zoning Jurisdiction
MSA.....	Metropolitan Statistical Area
NRS	Nebraska Revised Statute
SFH	Single-Family Home

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2019 Firth Comprehensive Plan as well as the 2018 Firth Housing Study were completed through the input of local residents, leaders, and professionals and was funded by Nebraska Investment Finance Authority. The two reports were complete concurrently.

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COMPREHESIVE PLAN DEFINED

Responsibility to Plan

According to Nebraska Revised Statutes (NRS) § 19-901(1), municipal governments in Nebraska are granted the authority to regulate land use within their jurisdictions.

For the purpose of promoting health, safety, morals, or the general welfare of the community, the legislative bodies in cities of the first and second class and in villages may adopt zoning regulations that restrict the height, number of stories, and size of buildings and other structures; the percentage of lot that may be occupied; the size of yards, courts, and other open spaces; the density of population; and the location and use of buildings, structures, and land for trade, industry, residence, or other purposes.

Authority to Plan

NRS § 19-901(2) explains that zoning regulations may not be adopted until a comprehensive plan has been completed, recommended by the planning commission and adopted by the village board.

Such powers shall be exercised only after the municipal legislative body had established a planning commission, received from its planning commission a recommended comprehensive development plan as defined in section 19-903, adopted such comprehensive development plan, and received the specific recommendation of the planning commission on the adoption or amendment of zoning regulations. The planning commission shall make a preliminary report and hold public hearings on its recommendations regarding the adoption or repeal of the comprehensive development plan and zoning regulations and shall hold public hearings thereon before submitting its final report to the legislative body. Amendments to the comprehensive plan or zoning regulations shall be considered at public hearings before submitting regulations to the public body.

Action Items

Planning Commission Public Hearing

A public hearing regarding the recommendation of this comprehensive plan was held by the Village of Firth Planning Commission on _____, 2019:

Planning Commission Recommendation

The Village of Firth Planning Commission recommended adoption of this comprehensive plan on _____, 2019:

Village Board Public Hearing

A public hearing regarding the adoption of this comprehensive plan was held by the Village of Firth Board of Trustees on _____, 2019:

Ordinance Passage

The Village of Firth Board of Trustees adopted Ordinance No. ____ of this comprehensive plan on _____, 2019:

1.0 BUILDING THE PLAN

The Village of Firth Comprehensive Plan is organized into chapters based upon the guidance and requirements listed within NRS § 19-903:

The regulations and restrictions authorized by NRS § sections 19-901 to 19-915 shall be in accordance with a comprehensive development plan which shall consist of both graphic and textual material and shall be designed to accommodate anticipated long-range future growth which shall be based upon documented population and economic projections. The comprehensive development plan shall, among other possible elements, include:

- 1) *A **land-use element** which designates the proposed general distributions, general location, and extent of the uses of land for agriculture, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, education, public buildings and lands, and other categories of public and private use of land;*
- 2) *The general location, character, and extent of existing and proposed major roads, streets, and highways, and air and other **transportation routes and facilities**;*
- 3) *The general location, type, capacity, and area served of **present and projected or needed community facilities** including recreation facilities, schools, libraries, other public buildings, and public utilities and services;*
- 4) *When a new comprehensive plan or a full update to an existing comprehensive plan is developed on or after July 15, 2010, but not later than January 1, 2015, an **energy element** which: Assesses energy infrastructure and energy use by sector, including residential, commercial, and industrial sectors; evaluates utilization of renewable energy sources; and promotes energy conservation measures that benefit the community. This subdivision shall not apply to villages; and*
- 5) *Annexation*
 - a) *When next amended after January 1, 1995, an identification of sanitary and improvement districts, subdivisions, industrial tracts, commercial tracts, and other discrete developed areas which are or in the future may be appropriate subjects for annexation and*
 - b) *A general review of the standards and qualifications that should be met to enable the municipality to undertake **annexation** of such areas. Failure of the plan to identify subjects for annexation or to set out standards or qualifications for annexation shall not serve as the basis for any challenge to the validity of an annexation ordinance*

1.1 Jurisdiction of the Plan

In accordance with NRS §17-1001(1), the geographical area covered by the Village of Firth Comprehensive Plan includes all land within a 1-mile area encompassing the village as shown in Map 1.1.

“...the extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction of a city of the second class or village shall consist of the unincorporated area one mile beyond and adjacent to its corporate boundaries.”

1.2 Decision to Plan

By creating and adopting this comprehensive plan, the Village of Firth Board of Trustees and the Village of Firth Planning Commission are choosing to actively envision, work toward, and create a healthy and vibrant community that protects the legacy of past residents, creates a thriving community for current residents, and preserves the natural and built environment for future residents.

Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.

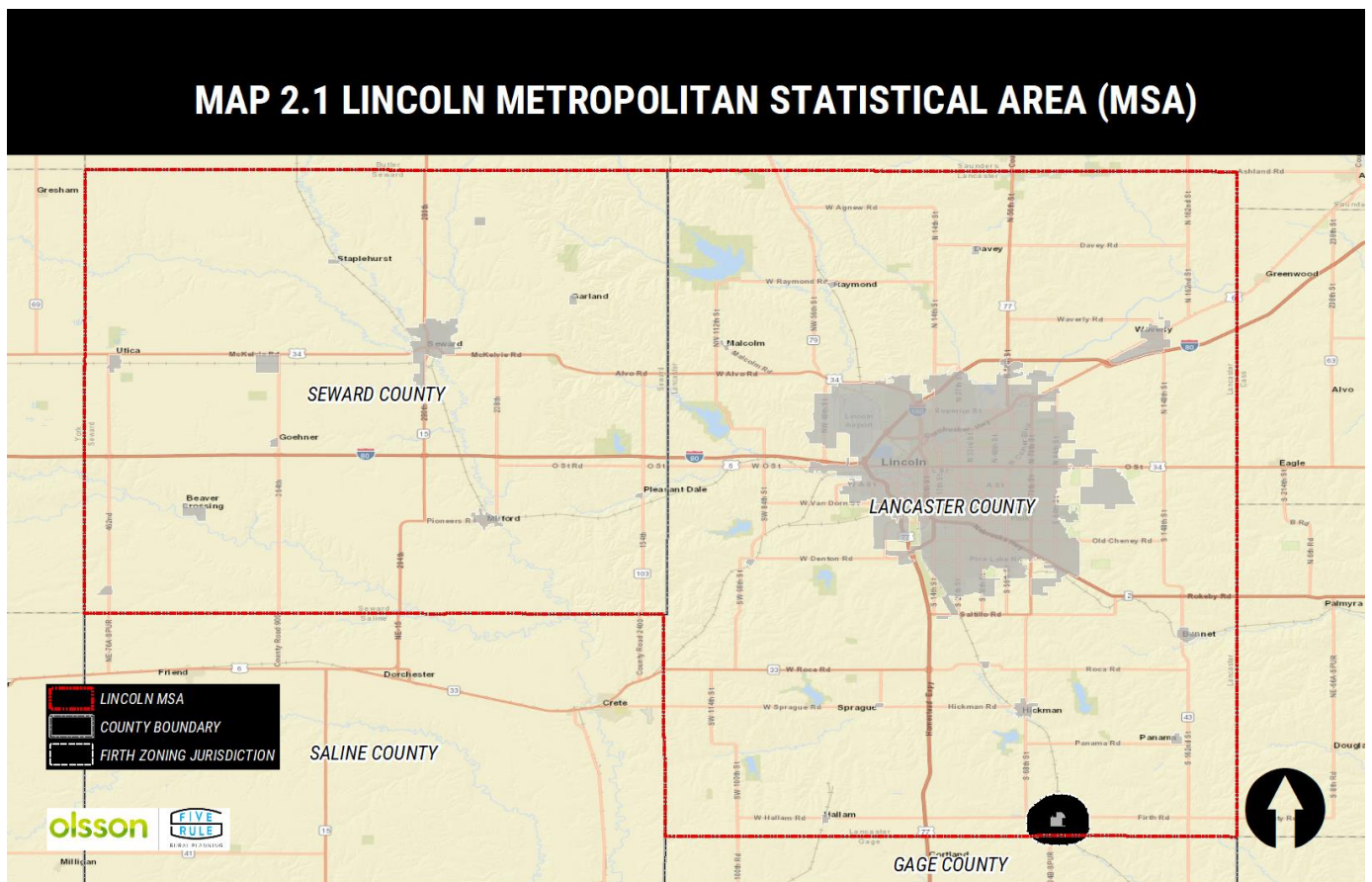
~Warren Buffett

2.0 DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS

Lincoln Metropolitan Statistical Area

The primary source of demographic and economic information was provided by the United States Census Bureau. The Village of Firth is located within the Lincoln metropolitan statistical area (MSA) as shown in Map 2.1. Growth trends for all towns within the MSA provide insight as to what has taken place within Firth and what the village can expect for regional and local growth.

Map 2.1. Lincoln Metropolitan Statistical Area.



2.1 Population Projections

The most recent population estimate for the Village of Firth was provided by the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2013-2017. Table 2.1 shows the population in Firth and the MSA from 1900-2018.

Table 2.1. Historic Population Trends, Firth and all MSA Communities (ACS 2017).

	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2018
LINCOLN	40,169	43,973	54,948	75,933	81,984	98,884	128,521	149,518	171,932	193,408	225,581	258,379	284,736
SEWARD	1,970	2,106	2,368	2,737	2,816	3,154	4,208	5,294	5,713	5,875	6,319	6,964	7,181
WAVERLY	266	297	334	315	306	210	511	1,152	1,726	1,869	2,448	3,277	3,838
HICKMAN	382	388	380	302	320	279	288	415	687	1,081	1,111	1,657	2,221
MILFORD	542	716	792	832	759	951	1,462	1,846	2,108	1,946	2,070	2,090	2,080
BENNET		457	473	428	412	396	381	489	523	544	570	719	892
UTICA	487	520	571	566	539	550	564	602	689	727	844	861	836
FIRTH	322	323	245	277	328	384	471	564	590	476	574	591	621
BEAVER CROSSING	359	542	543	522	550	425	439	400	458	448	457	403	409
MALCOLM			125	121	121	93	116	132	355	377	413	382	399
ROCA	177	127	133	107	127	105	123	118	130	87	220	220	290
PANAMA		230	210	198	174	168	155	153	160	208	253	256	281
HALLAM	168	212	193	168	172	264	280	290	309	276	213	214	240
STAPLEHURST	211	228	235	254	234	224	240	227	306	282	270	242	233
GARLAND	228	205	184	198	244	257	247	247	216	248	247	216	216
PLEASANT DALE		257	221	138	140	163	190	258	159	254	245	205	210
DENTON			145	114	126	101	94	151	164	161	189	190	204
BEE		207	228	205	205	160	149	156	192	209	223	191	187
RAYMOND	200	236	249	205	199	196	223	187	179	164	186	167	183
DAVEY			123	154	125	112	121	163	190	160	152	154	156
GOEHNER	150	126	125	67	106	113	165	192	186	154	186	154	155
SPRAGUE			112	135	121	110	120	119	168	158	146	142	151
CORDOVA	149	201	205	195	188	147	152	141	129	147	127	137	132
TAMORA			200						50	51	96	58	
WALTON												306	
YANKEE HILL												292	

The data contained in Table 2.2 includes the ACS estimate data compiled from January 1, 2013, through December 31, 2017; the ACS most likely did not include residents who built new homes in Firth in 2017 and 2018. Therefore, new residential permits have been considered and added to the ACS population estimate in order to get a more accurate population count for Firth. Table 2.3a shows the annual growth rate in the Lincoln MSA and Table 2.3b shows the annual growth rate in the Village of Firth.

Table 2.2. 2019 Calculated Population (FIVE RULE 2019).

FIRTH AVERAGE HOSUSHEHOLD SIZE (ACS 2017)	2.6
2017 NEW RESIDENTIAL PERMITS	17
PROJECTED INCREASE OF RESIDENTS BY 2020 (HOUSEHOLD SIZE x NEW RESIDENTIAL PERMITS)	44.2
ACS ESTIMATED POPULATION OF FIRTH IN 2018	577
2019 CALCULATED POPULATION (ACS DATA+BUILDING PERMIT DATA)	621.2

Table 2.3a. Lincoln MSA Annual Growth Rate (ACS 2017).

Year	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2018
%	1.22	2.34	3.29	0.73	1.90	2.96	1.69	1.51	1.17	1.62	1.45	0.98

Table 2.3b. Firth Annual Growth Rate (ACS 2017.)

Year	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2018
%	0.03	-2.41	1.31	1.84	1.71	2.27	1.97	0.46	-1.93	2.06	0.30	-0.24

Table 2.3c. Projected Growth Based on New Residential Building Permits (Village of Firth 2018).

FIRTH AVERAGE HOSUSHEHOLD SIZE (ACS 2017)	2.6
2016-2018 RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS	17
PROJECTED INCREASE (%) OF RESIDENTS BY 2020	44.2

Figure 2.1. Population Growth Over Past Century; Select MSA Communities (ACS 2017).

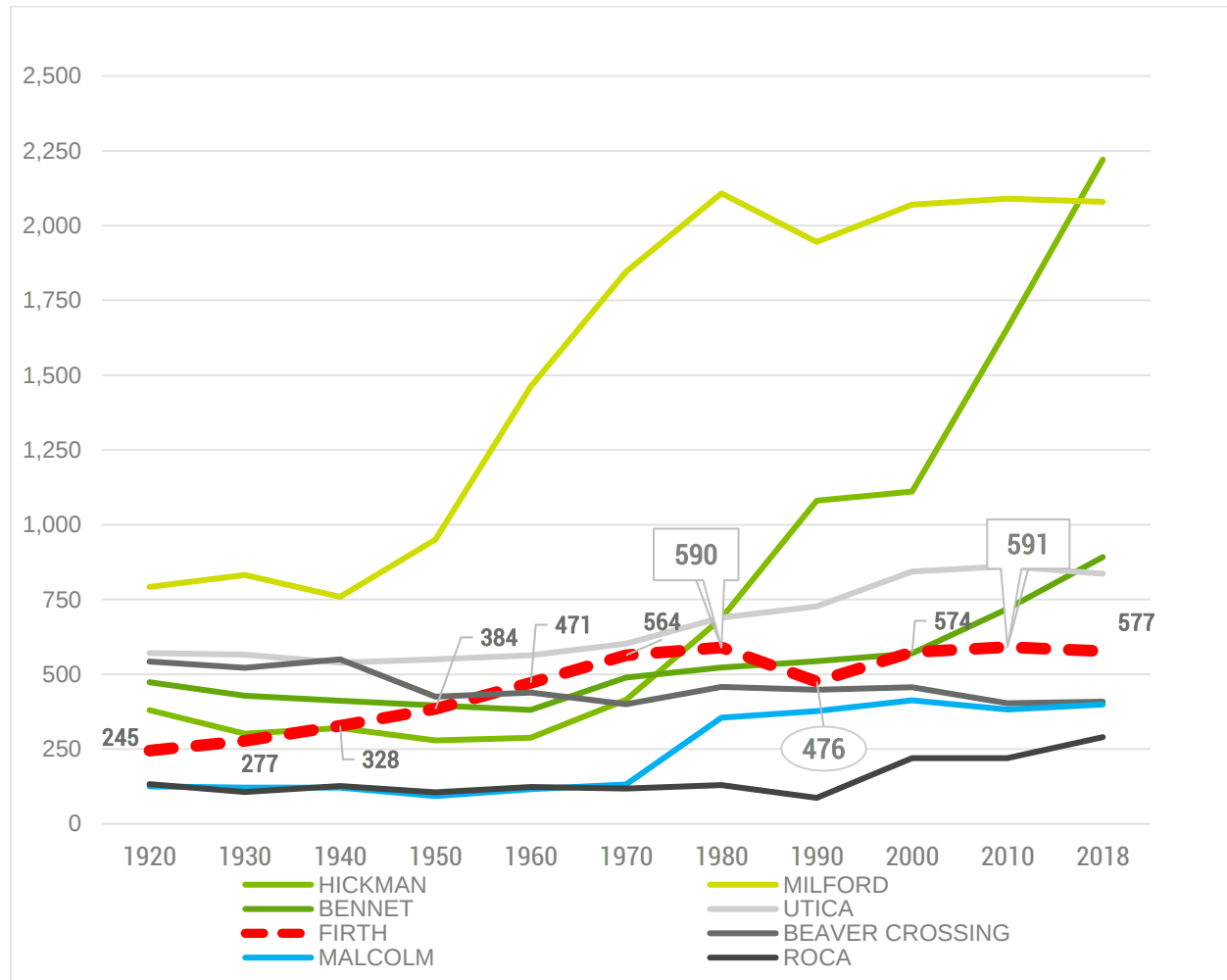


Figure 2.1 shows the growth trend of small cities and villages in the MSA with populations of fewer than 2,000. In the 1960s and 1970s, the City of Milford saw a dramatic increase in population, while the City of Hickman has seen a dramatic increase that began in 2000. The remaining communities have either held steady or experienced slight increases in population. This suggests that the Lincoln MSA is growing, with some communities growing faster than others. Figure 2.2 shows the growth rate percentage for the Lincoln MSA from 1930 to 2018 and figure 2.3 shows the growth rate percentage of Village of Firth from 1930 to 2018.

Figure 2.2. Lincoln Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) Annual Growth Rate (FIVE RULE 2019).

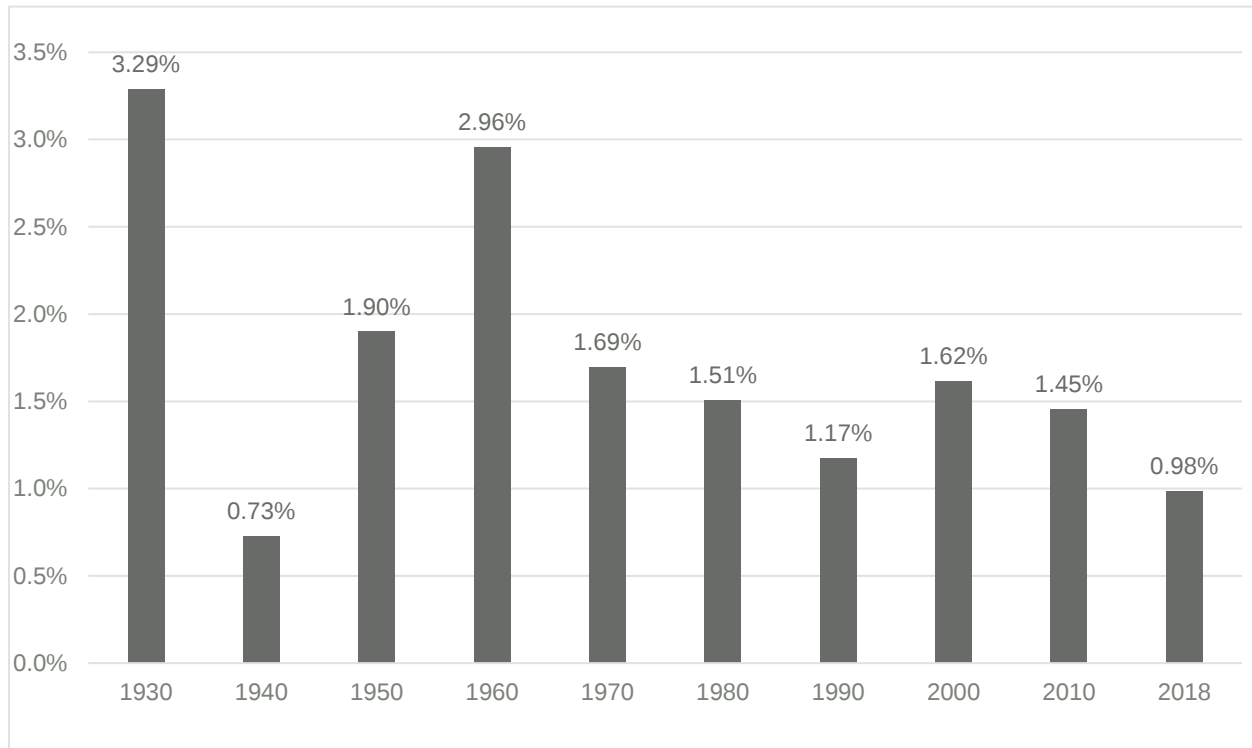
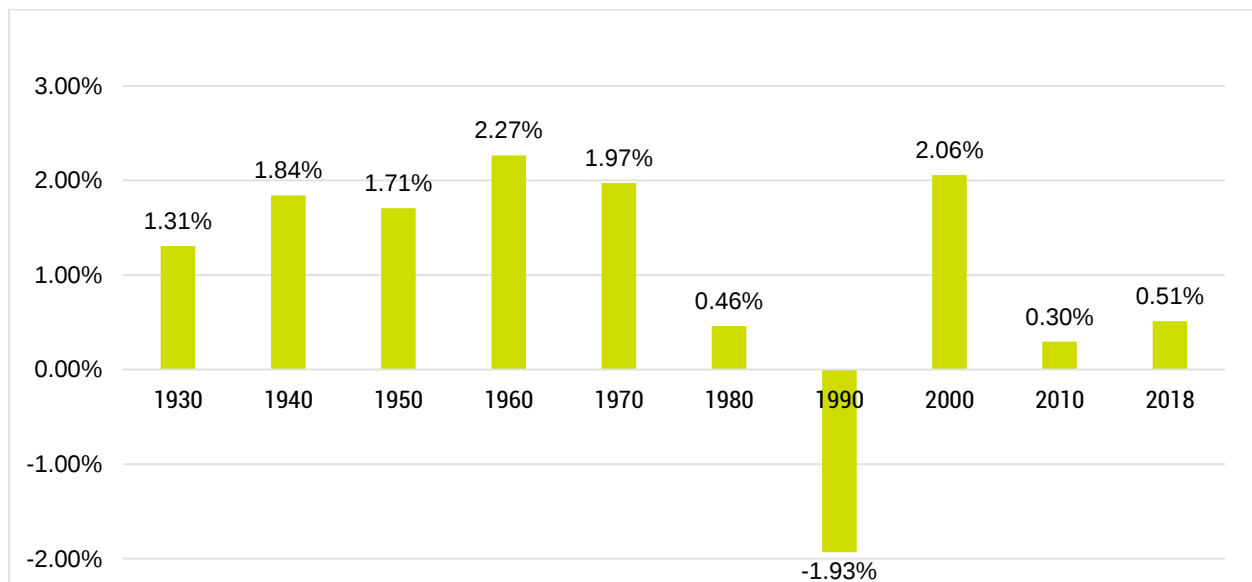


Figure 2.3. Firth Annual Growth Rate (FIVE RULE 2019).

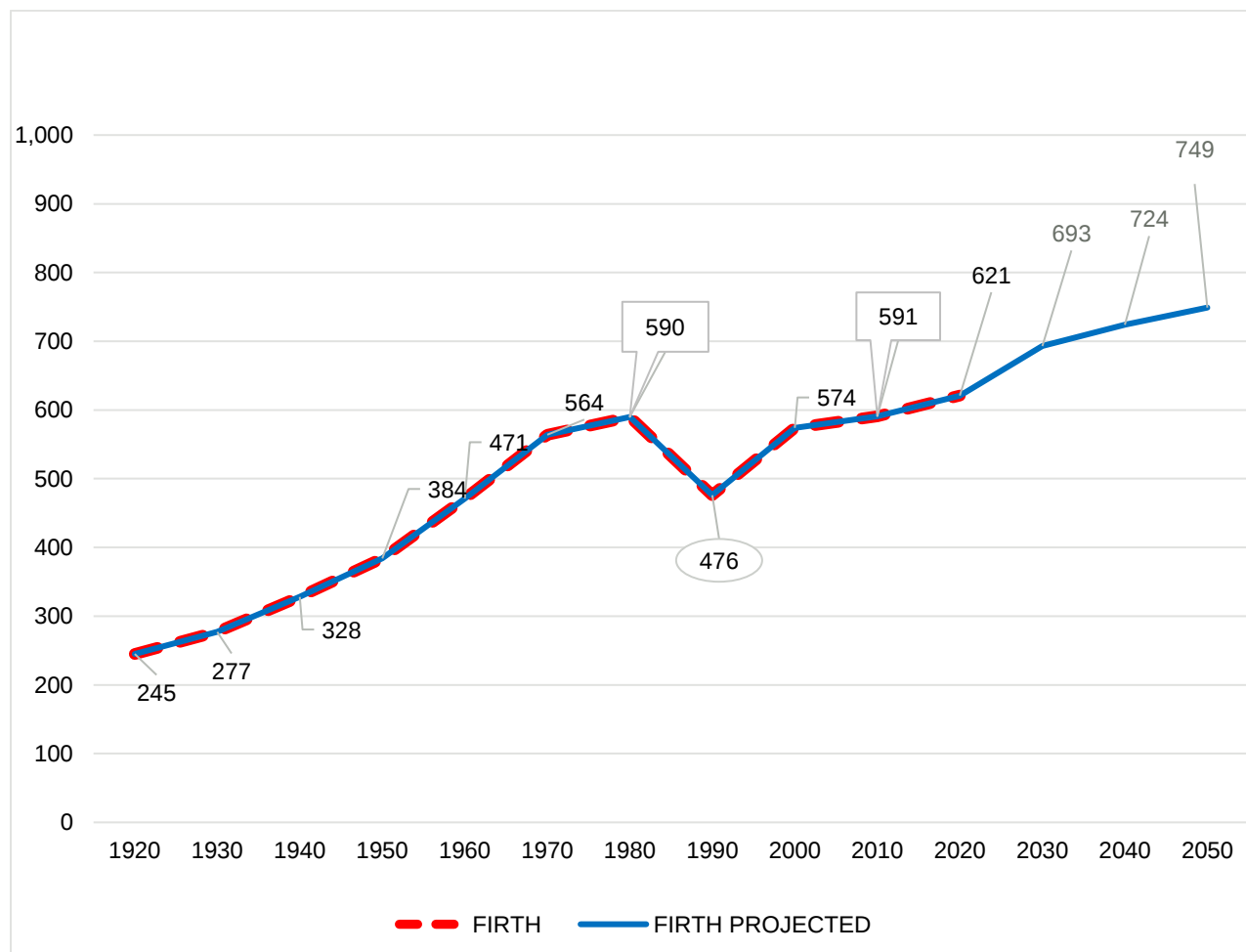


Since 1930, the village has experienced a positive growth rate for every decade, except the 1990s. The Lincoln MSA has a growth rate of more than 1 percent. Figure 2.4 shows the growth rate and future projection for the Village of Firth.

Figure 2.4 is a prediction of what could happen to the size of Firth if nothing changes and history simply repeats itself over the next 30 years. Should the same trend take place, the village would see an increase of approximately 120 residents by 2050.

When taking household size into consideration, the village would need roughly 46 new housing units to accommodate that growth in population. If the 17 building permits that were issued in 2017 are taken into consideration, 29 new housing units would be needed to accommodate the predicted population growth. Assuming the new housing subdivision, Northridge, will complete additional phases, the village should plan for continued residential growth beyond the projection provided in this chart. This chart should be used as consideration for the minimum amount of growth the village should be prepared to accommodate. Based upon this projected growth pattern, the Village of Firth could eventually become a second-class city after it surpasses a population of 800 residents.

Figure 2.4. Firth Population Projection (FIVE RULE 2019)

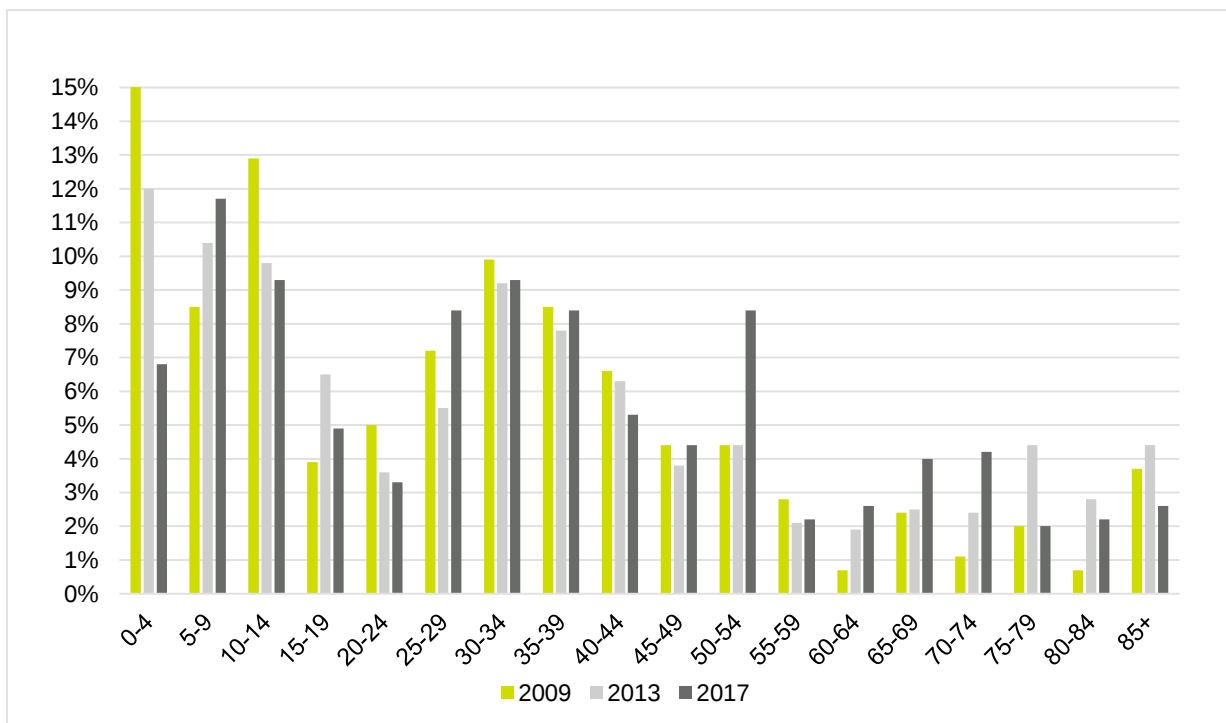


A consistent increase in households will steadily build the demand for services to meet the daily needs of the growing number of residents. Adding services could improve the quality of life for Firth residents by reducing trips to and from outside communities and providing more economic activity and tax revenue for the village. Figure 2.5 shows the proportion of children and infants

under 4 years has decreased in the last four years, along with children between the ages of 10 and 14. Adults aged 30-34 years have consistently accounted for slightly less than 10 percent of the population, which would explain the median age of the community moving from people in their 20's to people in their 30's as seen in Figure 2.6.

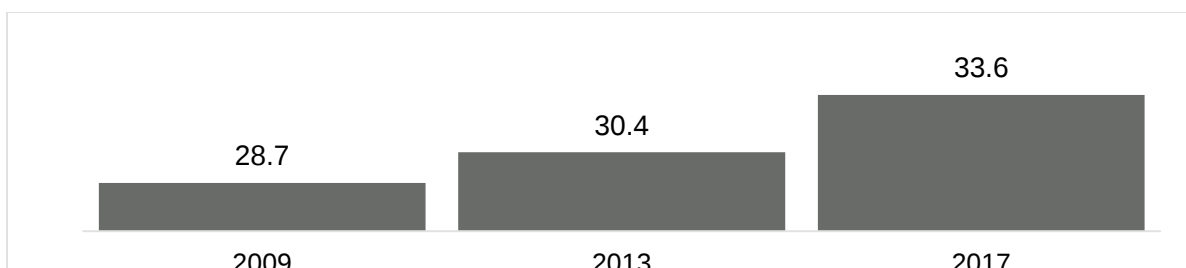
The percentage of 50- to 54-year-old adults has doubled since 2009. Adults older than 55 have not accounted for more than 3 percent of the total population in the past 10 years. Overall, the largest proportion of age ranges are children aged 5-14 and adults aged 25-39. These proportions suggest that the type of housing most desired in Firth will be homes that accommodate parents in their working years with children in their school-aged years. Adults aged 50-54, if they stay in Firth, will increase the future housing demand for retirees.

Figure 2.5. Firth Age Cohorts (ACS 2017).



The current median age in Firth is 33.6 years old. The median age has increased from 28.7 years old to 33.6 years old since 2009. Figure 2.6 show the increase in median age in Firth from 2009 to 2017.

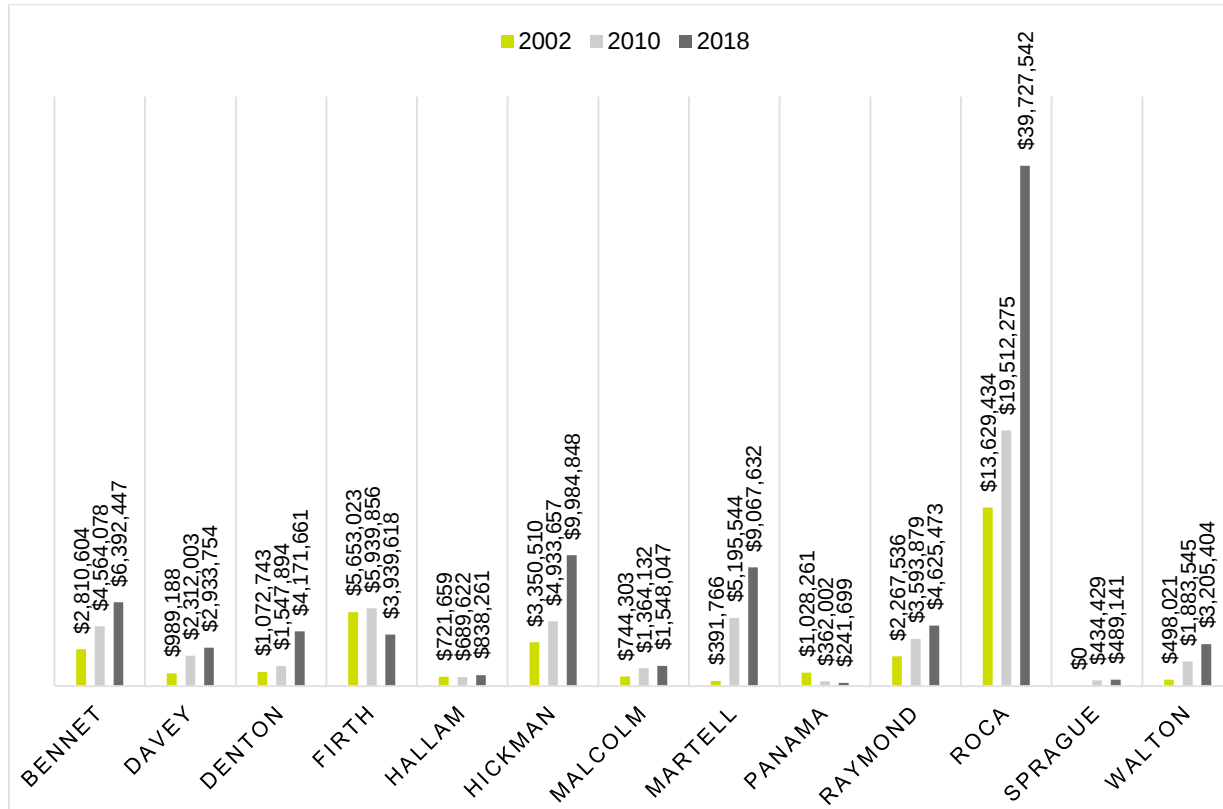
Figure 2.6. Firth Median Age (ACS 2017).



2.2 Economic Projections

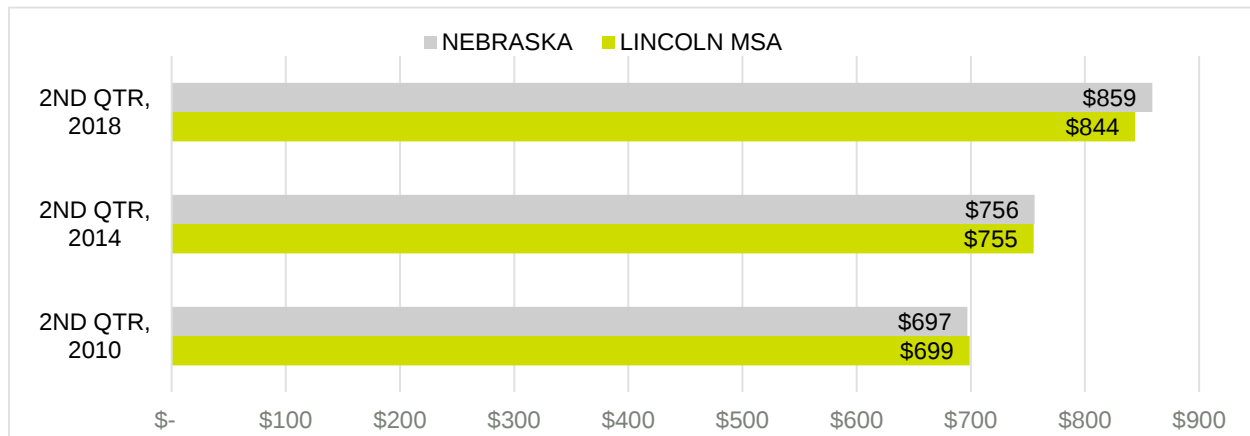
Figures 2.7, 2.8 and 2.9 suggest that incomes in Firth are strong; however, residents are most likely spending their money outside of Firth, likely in nearby communities. Even though Firth residents are spending their dollars in neighboring communities, neighboring residents are not spending their dollars in Firth.

Figure 2.7. Net Taxable Sale Lancaster County Communities (Nebraska Department of Revenue 2018).



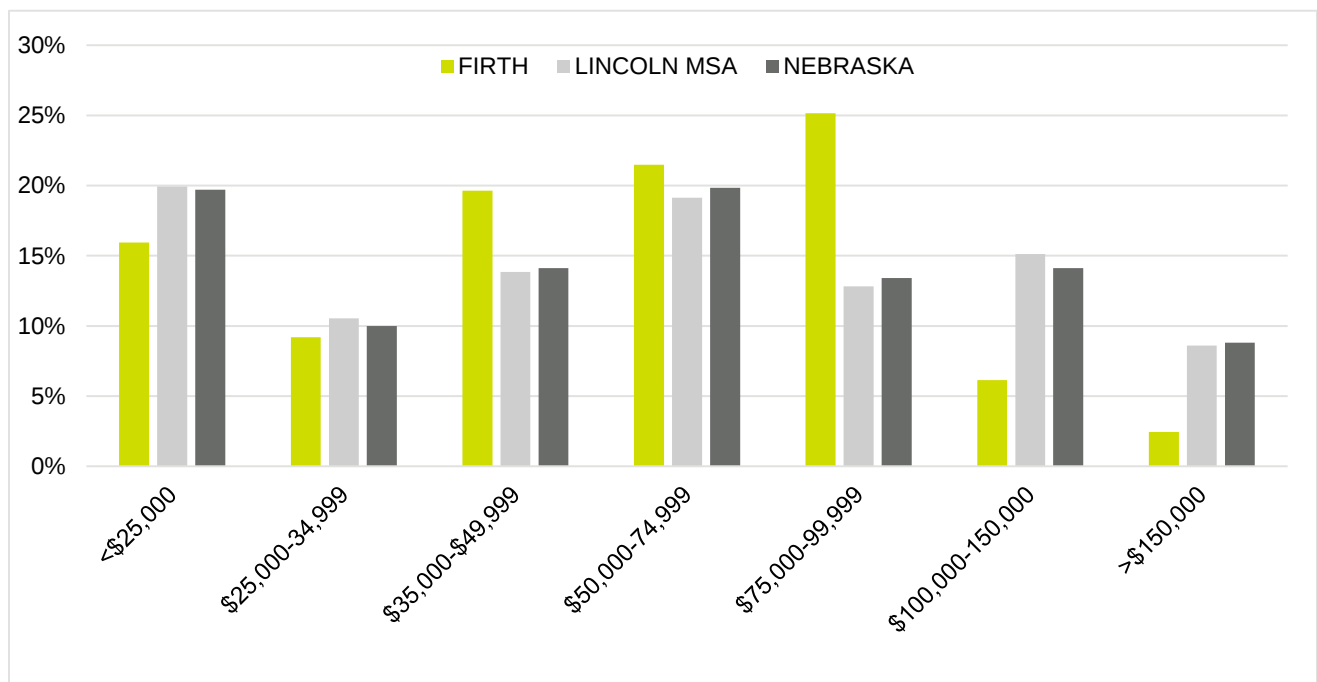
When compared to Lancaster County communities, Firth is the only community that has seen a decrease in the amount of taxable sales from 2010 to 2018.

Figure 2.8. Average Weekly Wage (FIVE RULE 2019).



Wages within the Lincoln MSA have kept pace with the growth in wages across Nebraska. All workers in Nebraska saw a slightly larger increase in wages from 2014.

Figure 2.9. Household Incomes, Firth, Lincoln, Metropolitan Statistical Area, and Nebraska (ACS 2017).



Incomes in Firth are strong, and 25 percent of the households have an annual income of \$75,000 – \$99,000. Firth, the Lincoln MSA, and Nebraska all have a third of households earning more than \$75,000 per year, yet each also has more than 10 percent of households earning an annual income of less than \$20,000, suggesting that a wide range of appropriately priced homes need to be available to accommodate the entire population.

2.3 Population and Economic Projections-Key Takeaways

Potential for Residential Growth

The potential for residential growth for the Village of Firth is strong. The Lincoln area is growing as a whole, and the opportunity to increase the number of homes and residents is present without the village making any additional attempts to recruit people to the area.

Type of Residential Growth

The community will need to remain conscientious of the type of residential growth that comes to Firth, particularly north of Firth Road. The challenge for the community's leadership and residents will be to ensure that the village retains its sense of community on both sides of Firth Road.

Economic Growth

The local economy in Firth is not as strong as the residential growth potential. In order to ensure that Firth remains a community, the village will have to support local businesses and be thoughtful about reserving land and developing it in a manner that attracts commercial businesses offering needed services for local residents.

3.0 TRANSPORTATION ROUTES AND FACILITIES

NRS § 19-903:

The general location, character, and extent of existing and proposed major roads, streets, and highways, and air and other transportation routes and facilities.

3.1 Routes

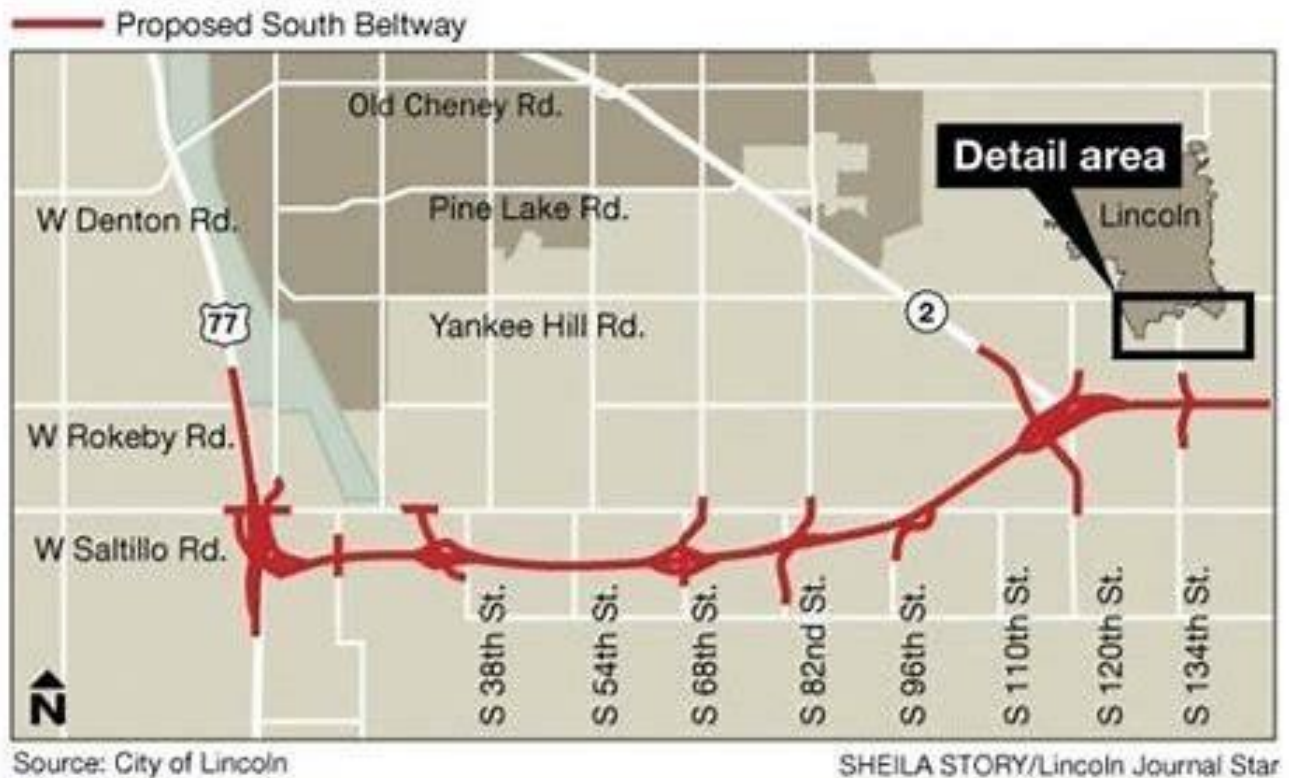
The Village of Firth has two local forms of transportation facilities: streets and sidewalks. The village is also affected by the active rail line on the east side of the village and by U.S. Highway 77, located about 5 miles east of the village. Firth Road is an arterial road that brings vehicle traffic in and out of the village. The main collector within Firth is 82nd Street, which brings vehicle traffic to the village and Firth Road. Everett and Nemaha streets with the village also function as collectors.

The location of Norris school north of Firth and the majority of commuters driving to work in Lincoln increases the use and decreases the safety of the county roads north of Firth, especially on Firth Road, South 68th Street, and South 82nd Street. In the summer of 2018, Lancaster County performed a traffic study was performed for South 68th Street (see Appendix A), which is the primary route to Norris schools. Norris schools serve several communities located south of Lincoln, including Firth students. The study concluded that portions of South 68th Street would warrant necessary improvements to enable this collector to accommodate increasing vehicle traffic.

Firth Road is owned and maintained by the village within the village's corporate limits, and it is owned and maintained by the county outside of the corporate limits. The village should carefully consider additional driveways and access off Firth Road in the future to maximize traffic flow on this arterial roadway.

The Lincoln South Beltway is a new route that will connect Highway 77 and Highway 2, south of Lincoln. The beltway is scheduled to be open to travelers by 2022 and is predicted to increase the amount of traffic and economic activity south of Lincoln, which will most likely affect Firth as well. Increasing traffic in the southern Lancaster County will require that the village pay special attention to approving new developments with additional through routes.

Figure 3.1. Lincoln South Beltway.



**MAP 3.1 VILLAGE OF FIRTH
MAJOR ROUTES**

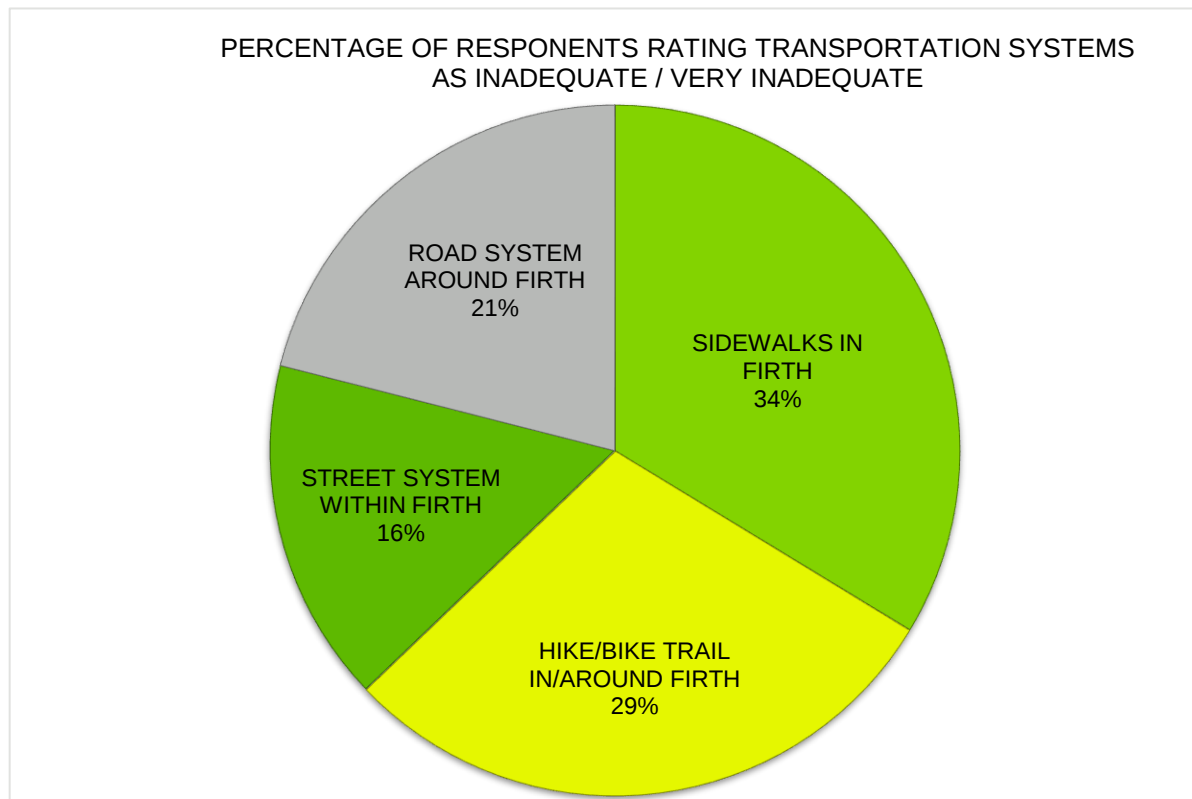
LEGEND:

- LOCAL STREETS
- MAJOR ROUTES
- TRUCK ROUTES
- BURLINGTON NORTHERN SANTA FE RLWY
- AT GRADE CROSSING
- OVERPASS CROSSING
- CURRENT VILLAGE BOUNDARY
- FIRTH ZONING JURISDICTION

3.2 Local Facilities

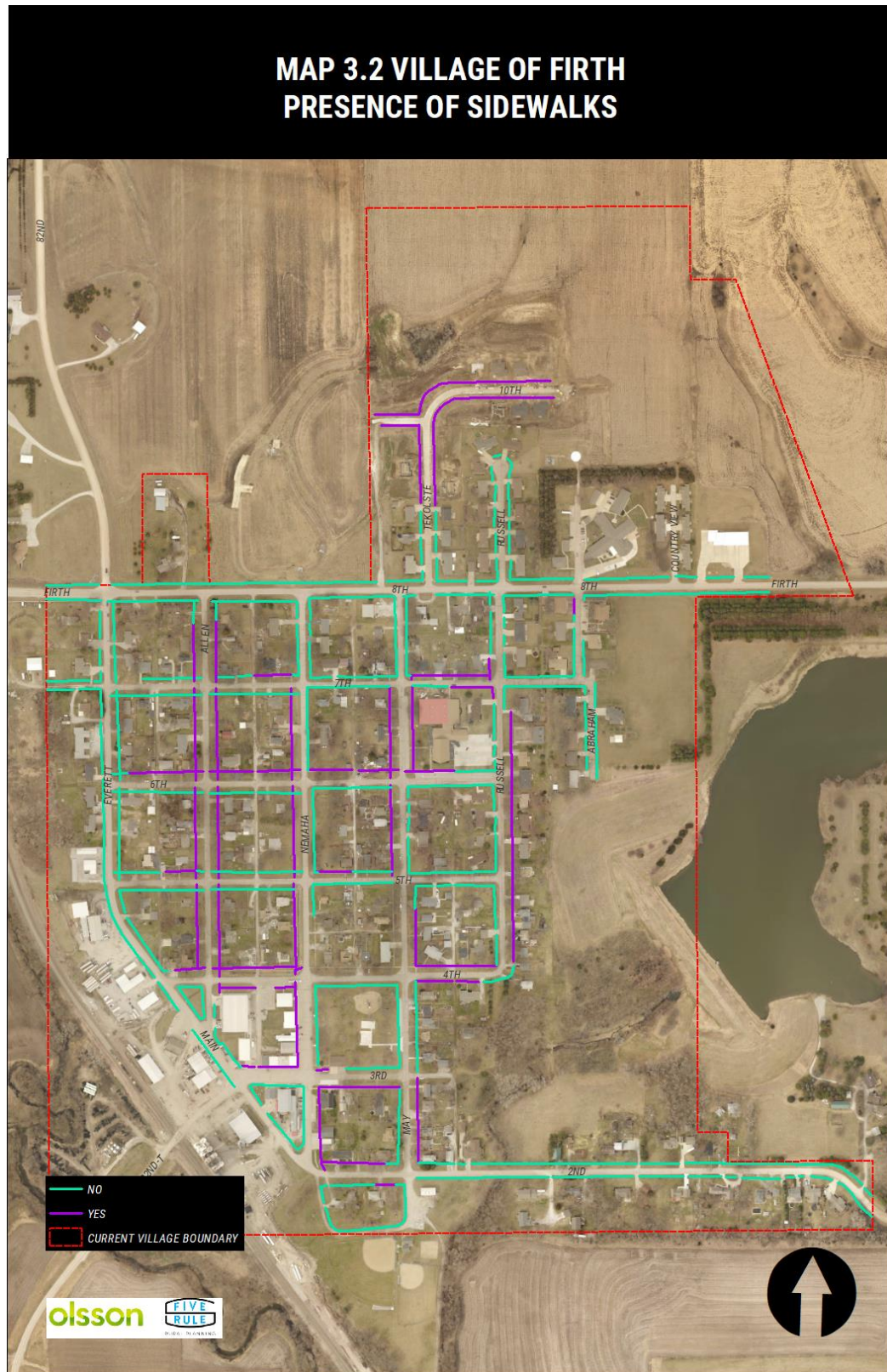
Figure 3.2 outlines responses found in the community survey. When asked about their satisfaction with local transportation routes in and around Firth, over one-third of respondents rated the sidewalk system as inadequate or highly inadequate. Almost one-third of respondents were also dissatisfied with the hike/bike trail in/around Firth. These responses indicate that residents would rather see improvement in walking/biking transportation facilities instead of local streets and roads.

Figure 3.2. Satisfaction with Local Transportation Routes (Community Survey 2018).



Map 3.2 represents the current location of sidewalks in Firth. The access to local sidewalks for residents on the north side of Firth Road will be continually changing as Northridge Addition continues to develop. The sporadic sidewalk system on the south side of Firth Road will stay the same unless the village takes steps to redevelop certain blocks and require the installation or repair of sidewalks during the building permit approval process. The village could choose to identify certain streets where off-street parking could be restricted to one side in order to make room for a shared pedestrian/bike lane. Road sharing may prove to be a more realistic option that serves bicyclists/pedestrians rather than requiring the installation/repair of the current sidewalk system. The newest residential addition the village approved was installed with a sidewalk network because the Village of Firth now requires sidewalks in all its new additions.

Map 3.2. Presences of Sidewalks.



The village recently began a trail master plan that has been delayed because of uncertainty concerning right-of-way and the overall vision for the future development of Firth.

Upon completion of this comprehensive plan, the village could return to the trail master plan and consider ways to share the road system, especially within neighborhoods on the south side of Firth Road.

3.3 Future Roadway Plan

The roadway plan is based upon the proposed future uses that will consist primarily of residential with some commercial lots reserved for services that will accommodate the anticipated residential growth.

As neighborhoods are planned, Firth will thoughtfully consider the need for through streets and multiple routes. The village needs to consider how to best utilize existing rail crossings, within the Village and the 1-mile extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction (ETJ). Currently, two overpass and three at-grade crossings are present, new roadway should be planned to utilize these existing structures.

This road plan has one primary goal: Increase the number of through east-west and north-south routes without adding or subtracting any current railroad crossings.

Careful transportation planning will be needed to avoid unsafe and inefficient situations that cause underdeveloped rural roads to serve increasing levels of daily vehicle traffic.

Map 3.3 represents proposed vehicle routes that should be considered should Firth continue to develop. Future collector streets are critical to facilitating traffic movements for future developments. The dedication of future right-of-way during the preliminary platting process will ensure collector streets will be developed with future development.

3.4 Transportation-Key Takeaways

Sidewalks and Trails

The community survey results indicated that the public is least satisfied with the adequacy of routes for pedestrians (walking) and trails (biking/hiking). The sidewalk system in Firth is sporadic and inconsistent, yet the roads, especially those in Original Town Firth (south of Firth Road) are wide and serve low levels of daily vehicle traffic. Therefore, the village should consider using road-sharing techniques along with sidewalk repair / installation options.

Trail Master Plan

The village has a trail master plan underway. Its completion has been delayed based upon the large number of unanswered questions concerning the need for right-of-way and the uncertainty of how Firth will continue to develop. The adoption of the comprehensive plan should inform the trail master plan, thereby assisting with its completion. As new neighborhoods are built and original neighborhoods are maintained, the village will consider routes where sidewalks and trails can serve a dual purpose.

Road System

Especially on the north side of Firth Road, several routes have been proposed that will become local streets (carrying people directly to their destinations) and collectors (delivering people to/from Firth). As the Northridge Addition is built out and additional subdivisions are considered, the village must pay special attention to ensuring the creation of through streets and multiple routes to serve travels to, from, and within Firth.

As South Lincoln continues to develop, Hickman continues to grow, and new residents place their children in the Norris School District, the village will need to consistently plan and advocate for multiple north-south vehicle routes and adequately developed roads.

4.0 PRESENT AND PROJECTED COMMUNITY FACILITIES

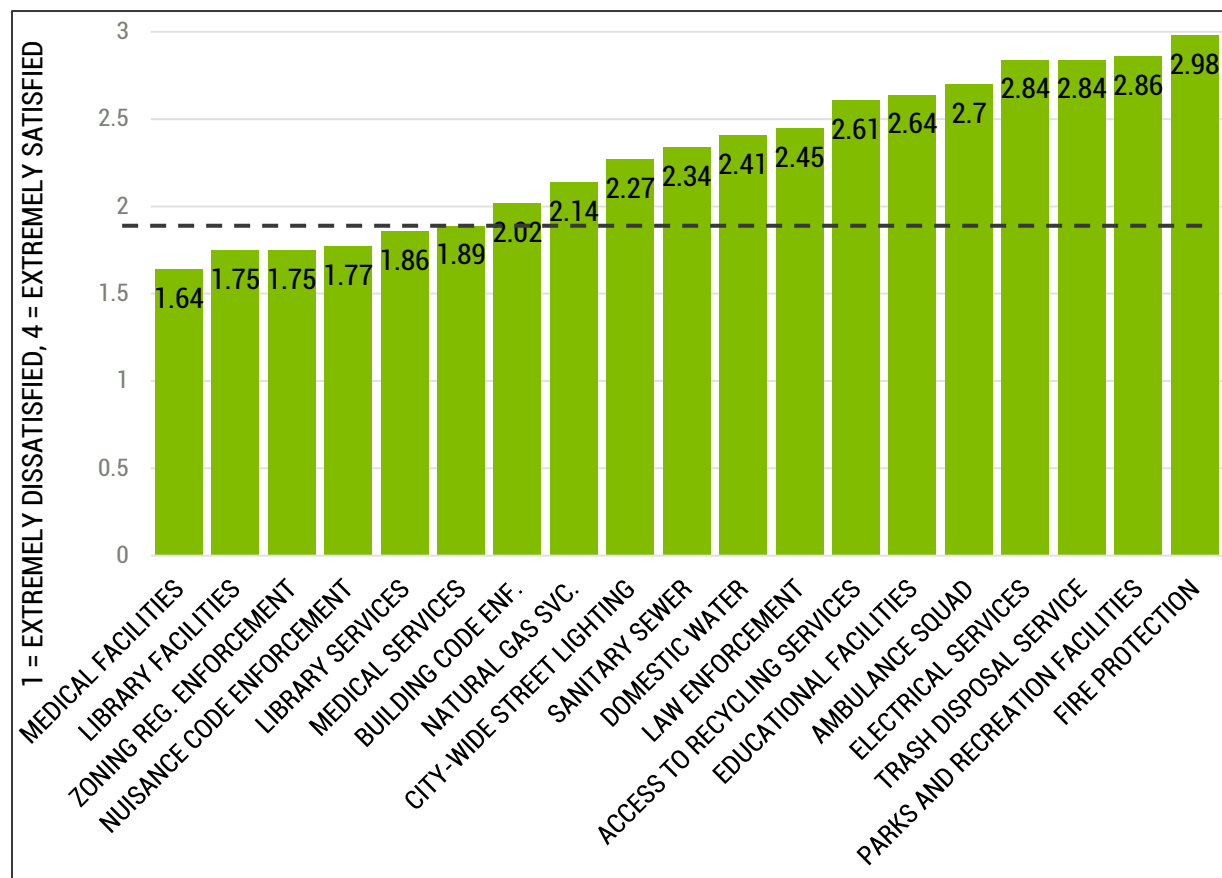
NRS § 19-903:

*The general location, type, capacity, and area served of **present and projected or needed community facilities** including recreation facilities, schools, libraries, other public buildings, and public utilities and services.*

4.1 Public Input

When taking the community survey, residents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with community facilities and services.

Figure 4.1. Satisfaction with Community Facilities and Services (Community Survey 2018).



Residents were least satisfied with medical and library services as well as zoning and nuisance code enforcement. Most respondents also felt that parks and recreational facilities and services and fire protection provided the most adequate facilities/services to residents.

4.2 Public Lands and Buildings

Map 4.1 shows the location of public lands and buildings. The village owns/has ownership interests in several properties and structures, including the following:

2 Parks: Main Park and Ballfields

1 Maintenance Building

1 Multipurpose Building: Village Office / Community Building

1 Rural Fire District Building (*shared with communities served by the Firth Rural Fire District*)

2 Wellhouses

1 Water Tower Site

1 Lagoons Field

10 Public lands, facilities, and buildings

Though it is not within the ownership of the village, nor is it yet an official park, land has been identified for future park space on the north side of Firth Road, located within what will be Phase III, Northridge Addition.

Map 4.1. Publicly Owned Lands and Buildings.



4.3 Water and Wastewater Facilities

The Village of Firth operates its own water and wastewater system. The village has several 4-inch domestic water mains that would be considered undersized today. Recommended Standards for Water Works recommends that, in order to provide adequate fire protection, a water main must be no less than 6 inches in diameter.



The village currently maintains three wells. Only one of those is currently used; the other two are intended for future use. The largest and newest well is located near the water tower, the second well is located on the same lot as Main Park, and a third well is located near the ballfields. The third well has nitrate issues and will most likely be abandoned.

The
Nebraska
Legislature

authorizes public agencies to create a wellhead protection plan, which identifies public wells and provides means for protecting the land surrounding those wells. The village has an adopted wellhead protection plan.



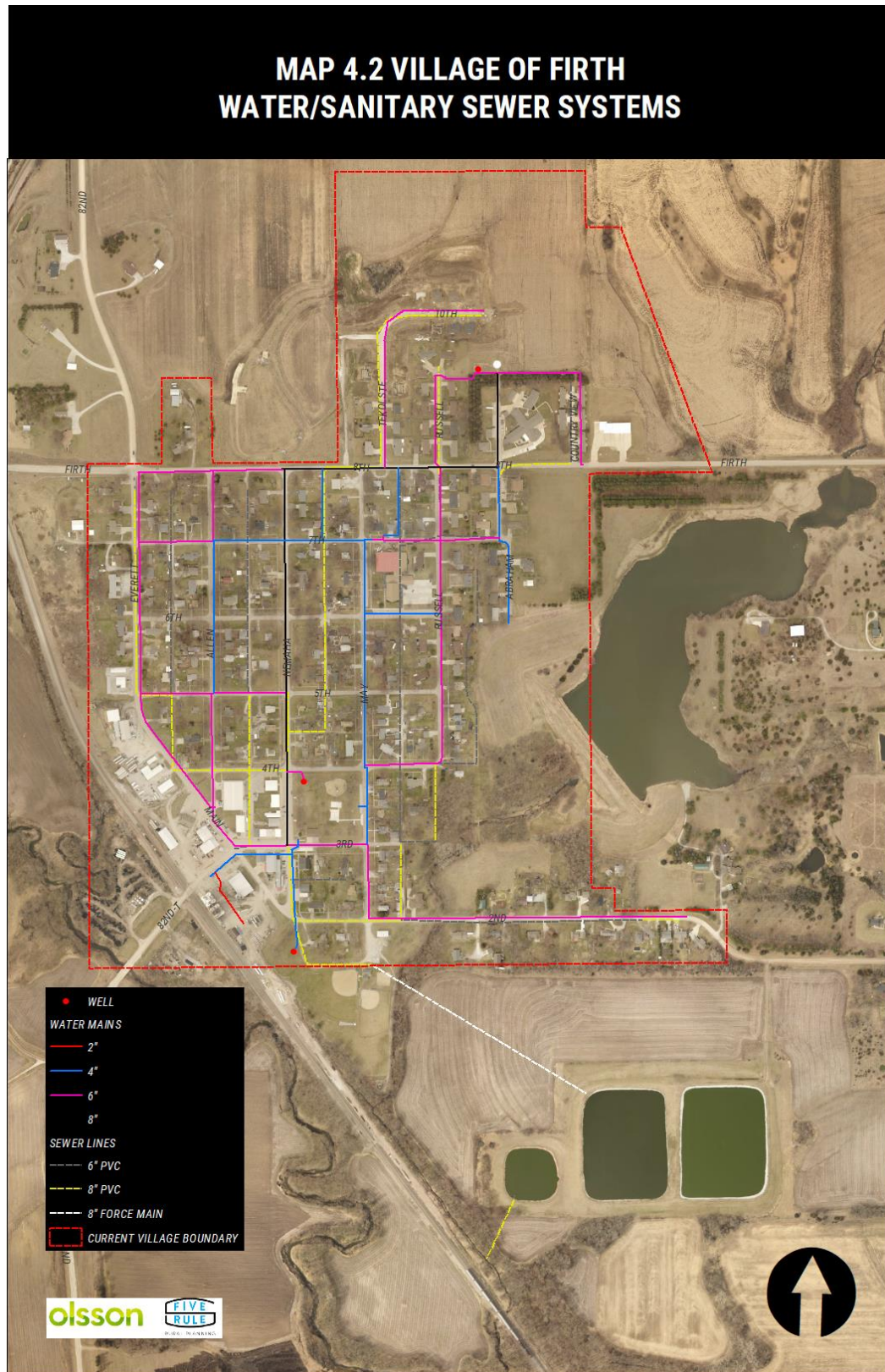
Table 4.1. Village of Firth Water Consumption (Village of Firth 2018).

	GALLONS CONSUMED	REVENUE GENERATED
2014	13,757,000	\$90,533.00
2018	15,506,000	\$121,308.00
% INCREASE	13	34

In 2014, the village supplied 13,757,000 gallons of fresh water to residential, commercial, and industrial customers and generated a revenue of \$90,533. Four years later, in 2018, consumption grew by over 1.5 million gallons, and 15,506,000 gallons were supplied to customers, which generated \$121,308 in revenue.

In 2016-2017, the village completed a lift station and lagoon overhaul. Although there are no official plans to transition from a lagoon system to a wastewater treatment plant, the village anticipates the eventual transition from a lagoon system to a full treatment plant because of expected residential growth and because of state regulations.

Map 4.2. Water and Sanitary Sewer Systems.



Map 4.2.a Sanitary Sewer System.



**MAP 4.2b VILLAGE OF FIRTH
WATER SYSTEM**

• WELL

WATER MAINS

2"

4"

6"

8"

— CURRENT VILLAGE BOUNDARY

olsson FIVE RULE

01/23

4.4 Parks

The village currently owns and maintains two parks: Main Park and Ballfields.

Main Park

Main Park is roughly 2.07 acres. The park encompasses an entire block and serves local and nearby residents with a splashpad, playground equipment, a basketball court/tennis court, two picnic shelters, and open space.

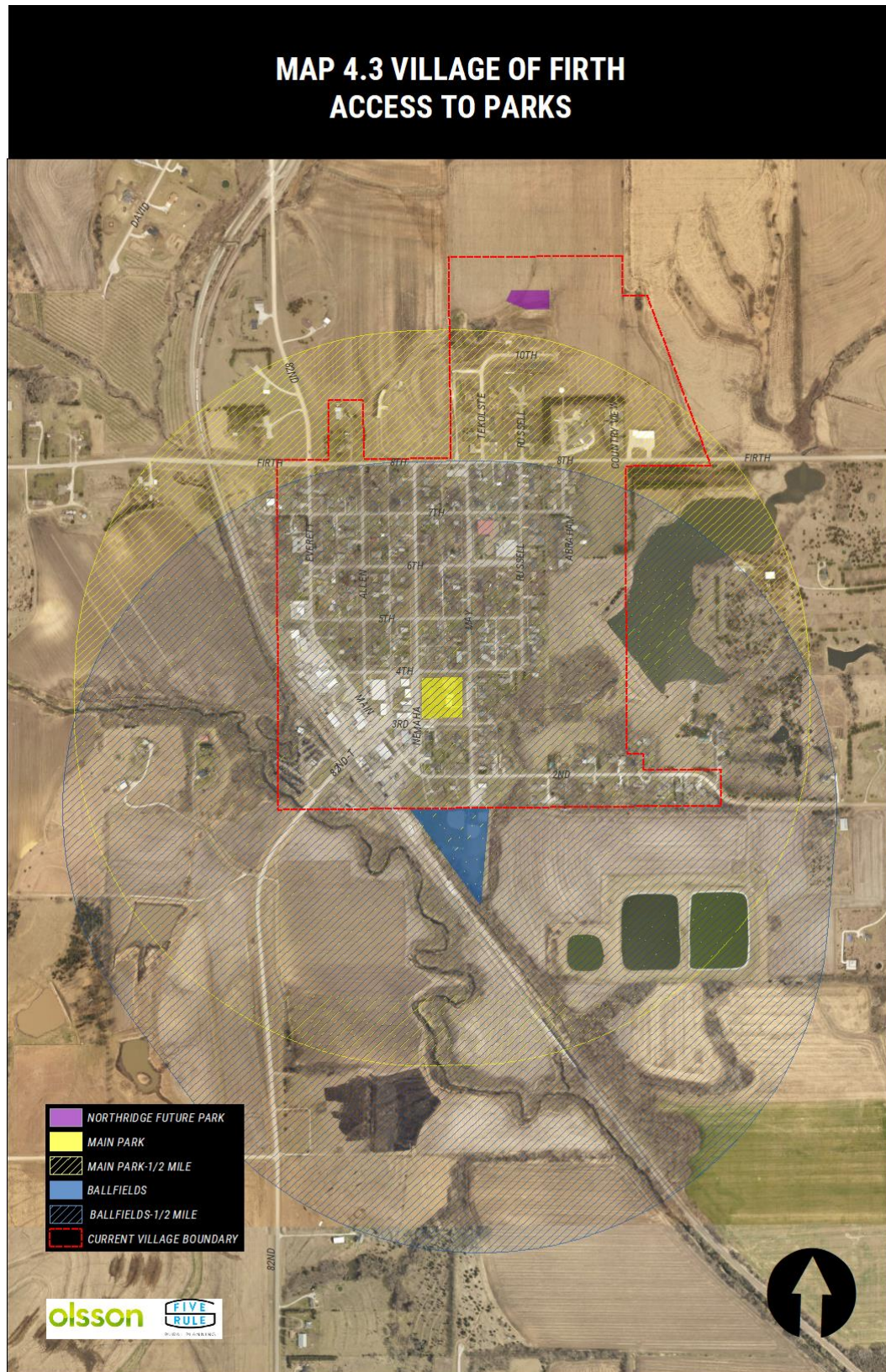
Ballfields

Ballfields Park is 12.05 acres and provides playground equipment, two softball/baseball fields, and one volleyball court.

The total size of park space offered by both parks is 14.12 acres. Standards provided by the American Planning Association state that 2 acres of parkland should be dedicated for every 100 residents in a community. Based upon Firth's most current population estimate of 621 (ACS 2016), the village should have 12.42 acres of park space. Currently, the village has adequate park space. However, the anticipated residential growth north of Firth Road will require additional park space. When the Firth population reaches 700 residents, the village will be heading into a park space shortage.

Map 4.3 shows the two locations of Firth's two current parks and the proposed location of park space in the Northridge Addition as well as a one-half mile radius around each park. Based on the one-half mile radius, most residents live within one-half-mile of a current park. However, many new residents on the north side of Firth Road are currently outside of the radius. Furthermore, these residents are forced to cross Firth Road, a busy collector street, when attempting to visit either park. Being forced to cross Firth Road to visit a park is most likely having three negative effects on residents: (1) feeling of decreased safety; (2) decreased likelihood to walk and visit either park; and (3) decreased likelihood of identifying themselves as members of the Firth community.

Map 4.3. Access to Parks.



4.5 Community Facilities – Key Takeaways

Community Facilities and Services

According to the community survey, residents are least satisfied with access to library services and medical services. As population grows, the village could investigate the cost and feasibility of introducing and increasing local library services. The village can also reserve space and investigate the feasibility of recruiting medical professionals and services to the community. The access to several medical facilities in several nearby towns will make the attraction of medical services a challenge. The village should be prepared to offer incentives to assist healthcare providers in establishing a practice.

Emergency Services

Residents voiced the greatest level of satisfaction with emergency services and parks/recreation. The Firth Rural Fire District has a new facility; however, growing population should equate to a growing base of volunteer firefighters. To date, this has not been the case, and the Rural Fire District is challenged with recruiting a capable volunteer force. Furthermore, the increasing traffic on Lancaster County roads has increased the occurrence of accidents with injuries, thereby placing greater strain on the Firth Rural Fire District. As residents continue to call Firth home, and as the Norris School District continues to expand, having adequate emergency services will be an ongoing concern. Firth is only one of the villages served by the rural fire district, yet the ability of the district to manage its workload will affect the quality of life and safety of residents.

The village has an agreement with the Lancaster County Sheriff's Department to provide local law enforcement to services to Firth residents. Increasing amounts of traffic moving through the Firth community at increasingly faster speeds is a growing concern for the community. The village has control of Firth Road within its corporate limits and has purchased and used a radar sign intended to slow traffic along Firth Road; however, traffic enforcement is within the sector of responsibility for the Sheriff's Department.

Wastewater Facilities

As part of capital improvement planning, the village will need to remain prepared to invest in the maintenance and expansion of its current system and eventual wastewater treatment plant.

Park and Recreation

During all three phases of the public input process, residents continually pointed to the parks facilities as one of the most important quality-of-life attractions that brought people to Firth. However, residents, especially those on the north side of Firth Road, voiced concerns about the difficulties involved with crossing Firth Road to visit the parks. The village currently has enough park space to serve its residents; however, new residents on the north side are more than one-half mile away from a park, and Firth Road is a barrier. Therefore, future park space has been identified and reserved for the expansion of the park system in Firth.

Upon the completion of this comprehensive plan and approval of Map 5.4 the village should complete its master trails plan, since residents also voiced a strong desire for a trails system.



5.0 LAND USE AND ANNEXATION

NRS § 19-903:

The proposed general distributions, general location, and extent of the uses of land for agriculture, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, education, public buildings and lands, and other categories of public and private use of land;

5.1 Existing Land Use

In order to determine future land use goals for Firth, goals for Firth, the planning team completed an inventory of the village's current land situation in the fall of 2018.

Table 5.1. Existing Land Use by Number of Lots (FIVE RULE 2019).

USE	# OF LOTS	% OF TOTAL LOTS
AGRICULTURE	58	11
CIVIC/RELIGIOUS	3	1
COMMERCIAL	21	4
QUASI-PUBLIC	12	2
INDUSTRIAL	19	4
OPEN/NON-DEVELOPABLE	5	1
RESIDENTIAL-MULTI-FAMILY	15	3
RESIDENTIAL-SINGLE FAMILY	335	66
VACANT BUILDINGS	3	1
VACANT LOTS	38	7
TOTAL	509	100

Figure 5.1. Existing Land Use by Number of Lots (FIVE RULE 2019).

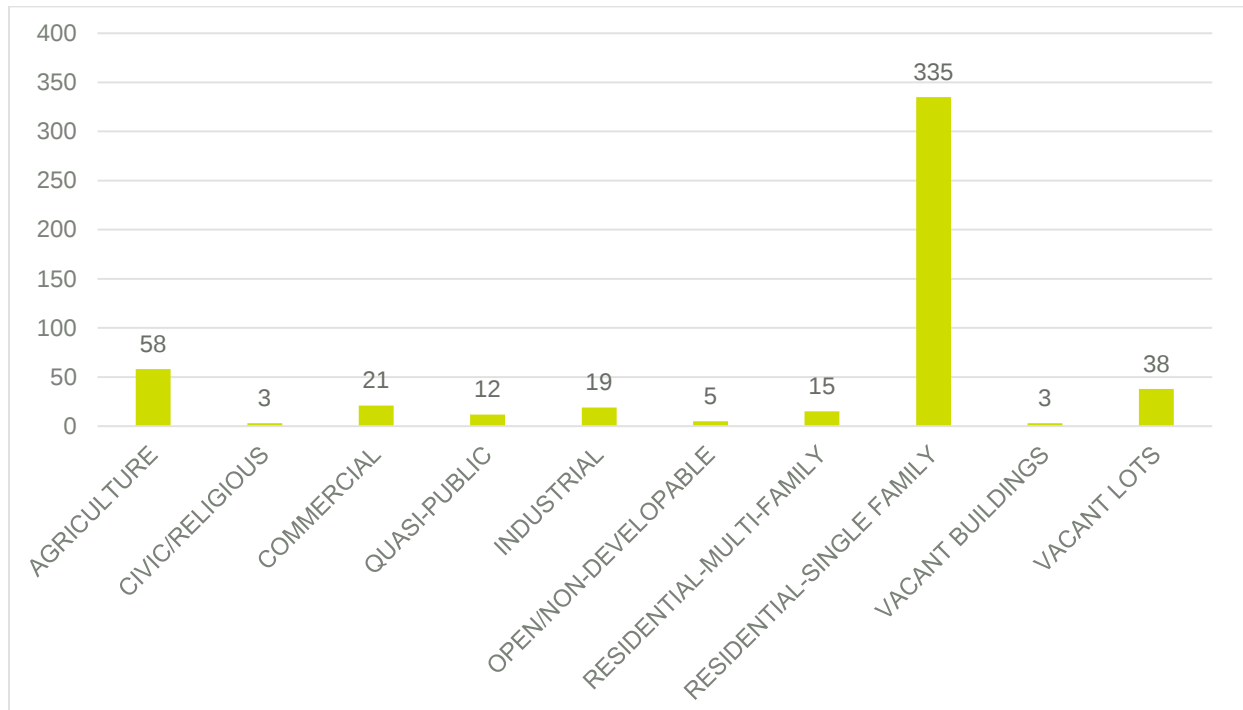
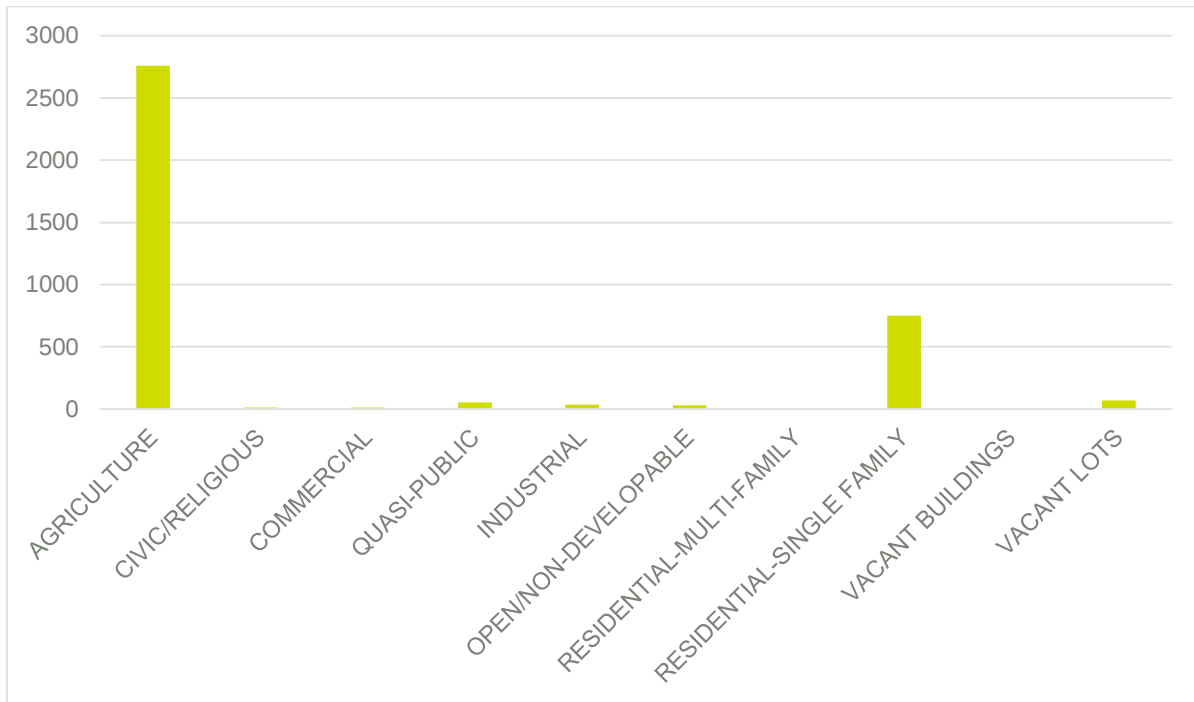


Table 5.2. Existing Land Use by Number of Acres (FIVE RULE 2019).

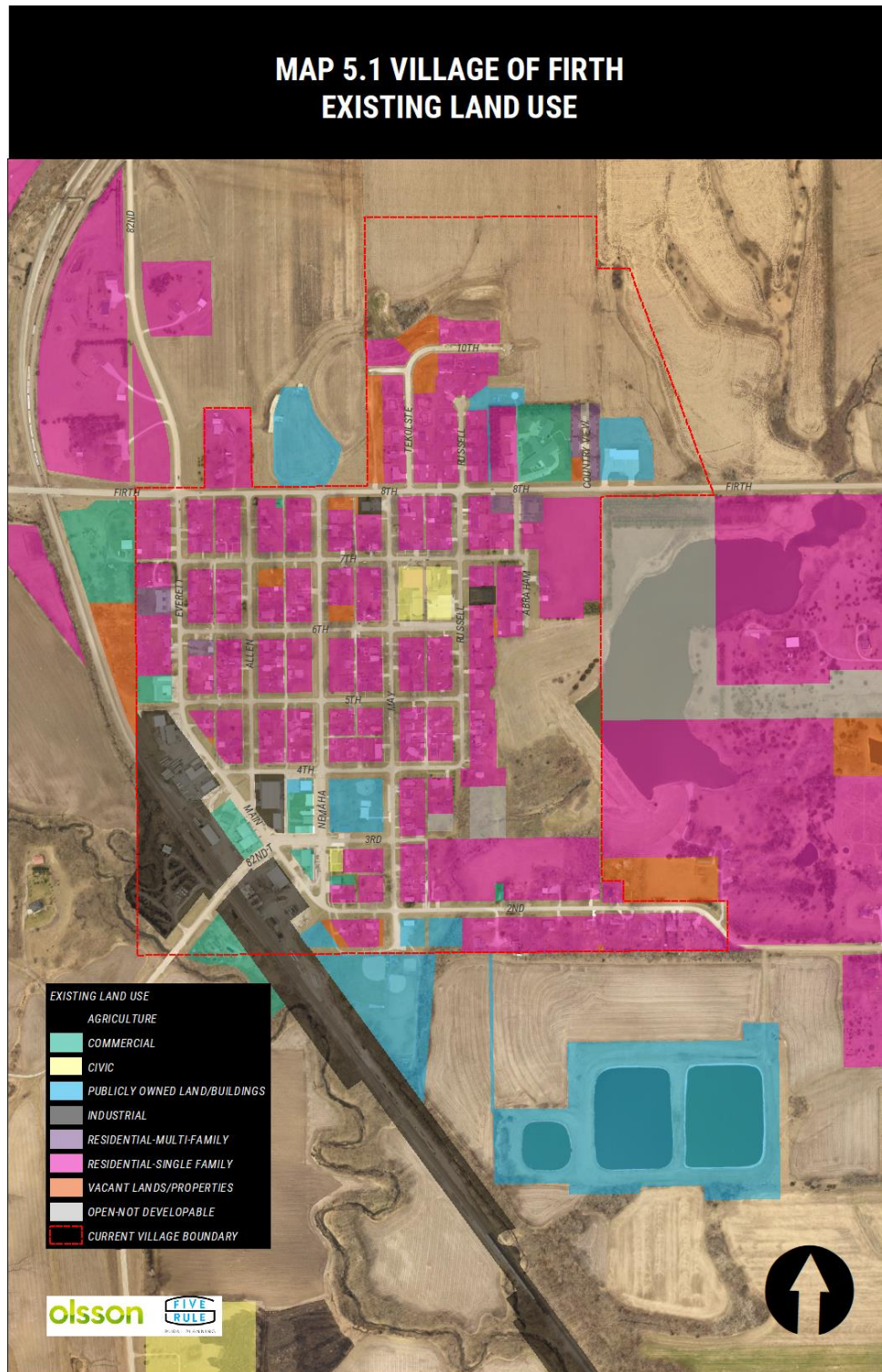
USE	# OF ACRES	% OF TOTAL ACRES
AGRICULTURE	2760	74
CIVIC/RELIGIOUS	12	0
COMMERCIAL	13	0
QUASI-PUBLIC	54	1
INDUSTRIAL	35	1
OPEN/NON-DEVELOPABLE	32	1
RESIDENTIAL-MULTI-FAMILY	3	0
RESIDENTIAL-SINGLE FAMILY	751	20
VACANT BUILDINGS	1	0
VACANT LOTS	68	2
TOTAL	3728	100

Figure 5.2. Existing Land Use by Number of Acres (FIVE RULE 2019).



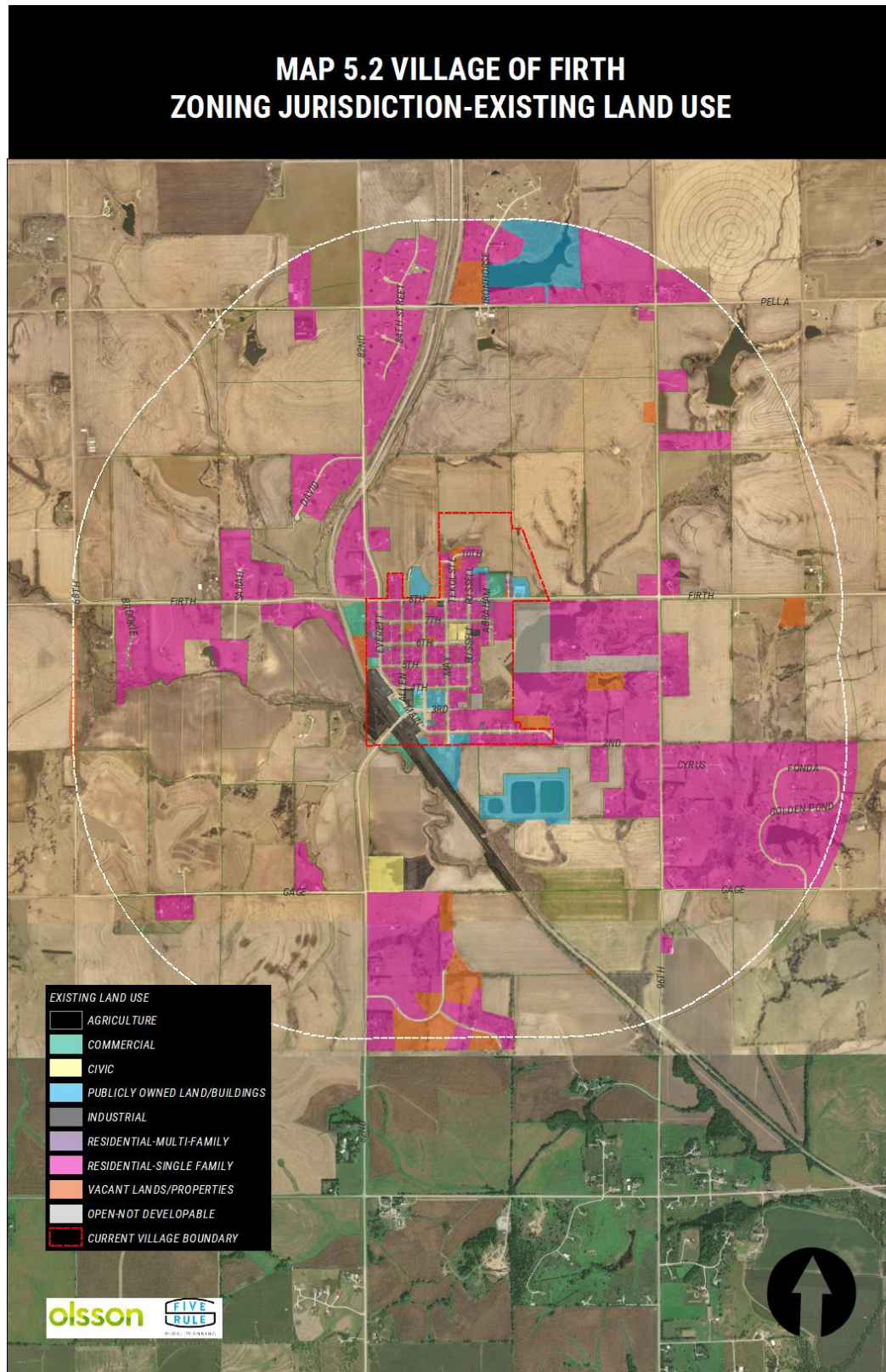
When considering land use by lots, the primary users of land are categorized as residential, vacant lots, and commercial. When considering the number of acres occupied by a certain use, residential, agricultural, and industrial are within the top three users of land.

Map 5.1. Firth Village Existing Land Use.



An inventory of the land uses within the 1-mile ETJ was also completed. The land within the ETJ is mainly occupied by agricultural and residential lots.

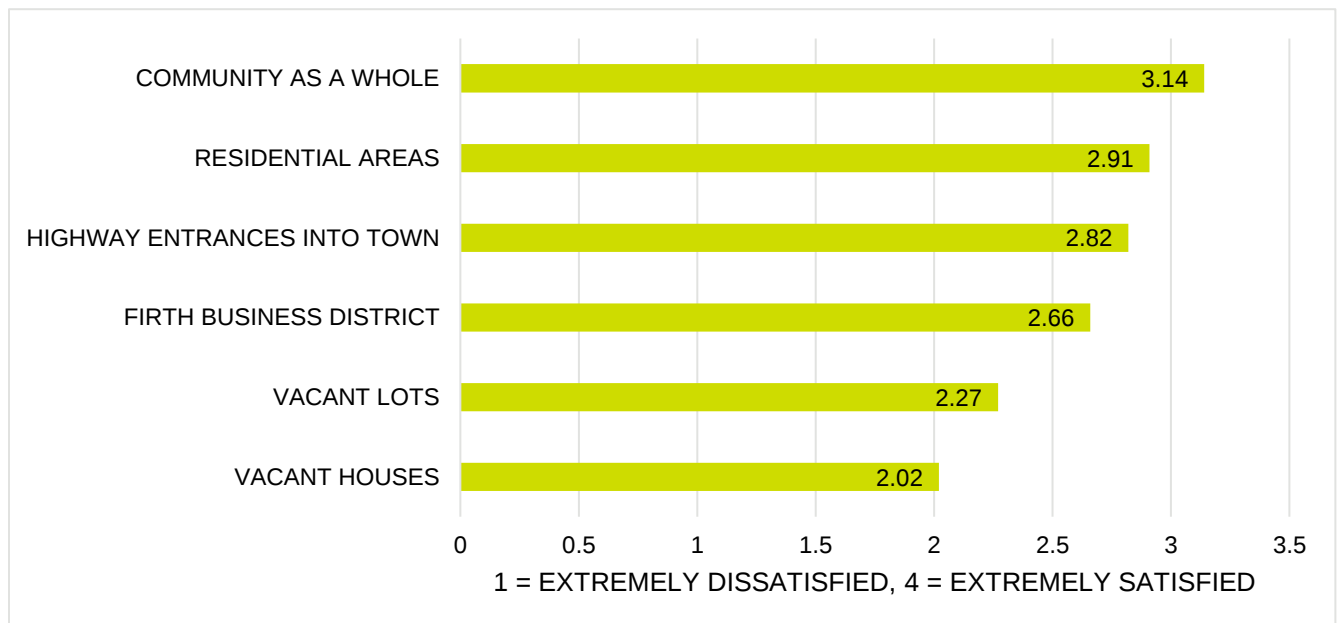
Map 5.2. Firth 1-Mile Existing Land Use.



5.2 Condition and Status of Structures

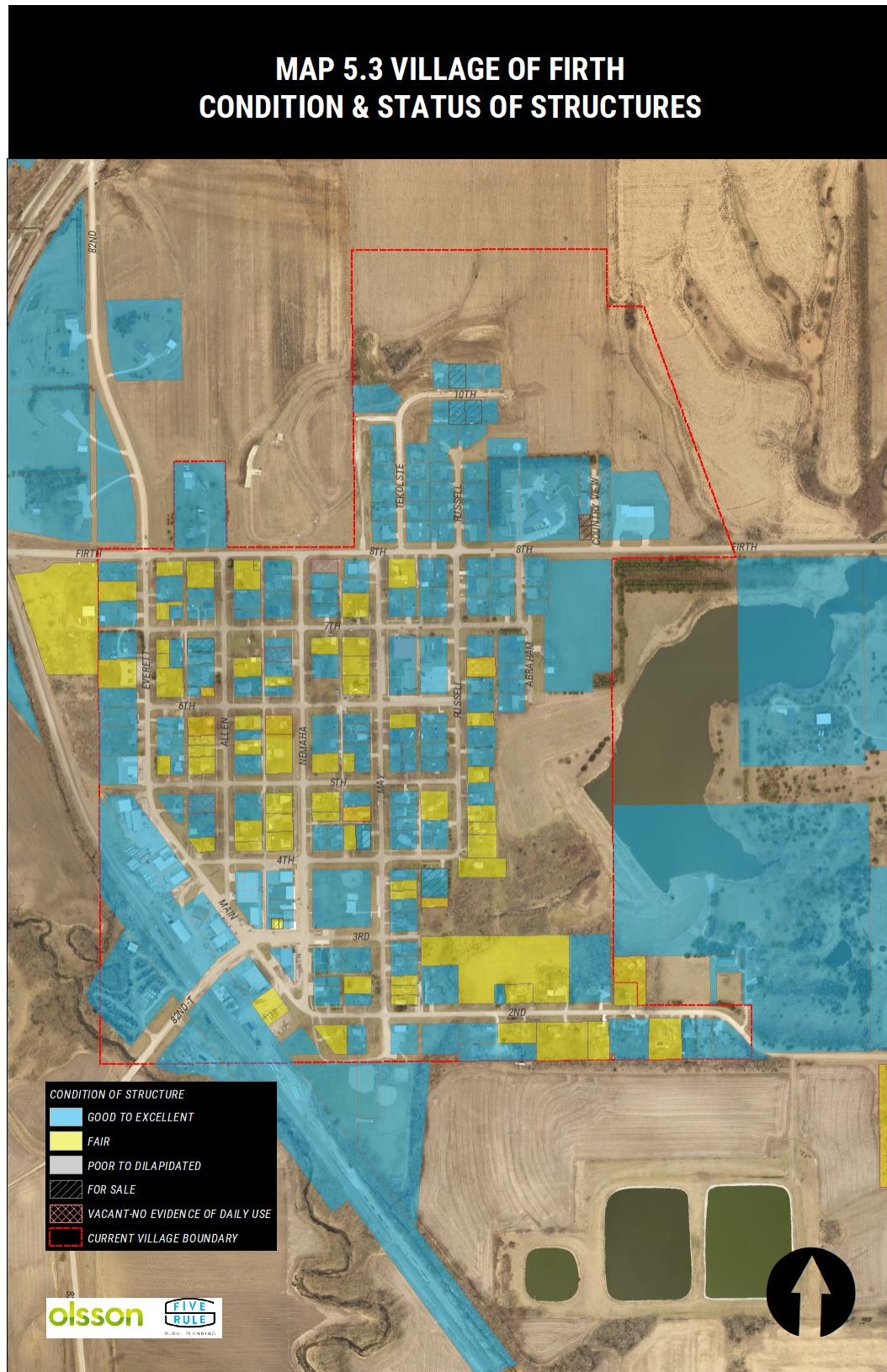
Firth is a well-maintained community, and most of the structures are labeled as good to excellent. While the vacancy status of some lots was questioned, very few lots had structures in a poor or dilapidated condition, and no abandoned structures were identified.

Figure 5.3. Satisfaction with Community Appearance (Community Survey 2018).



According to the data shown in Figure 5.3, respondents are satisfied with most aspects of Firth. The categories that received the lowest marks from residents were vacant lots, vacant houses, and the Firth Business District.

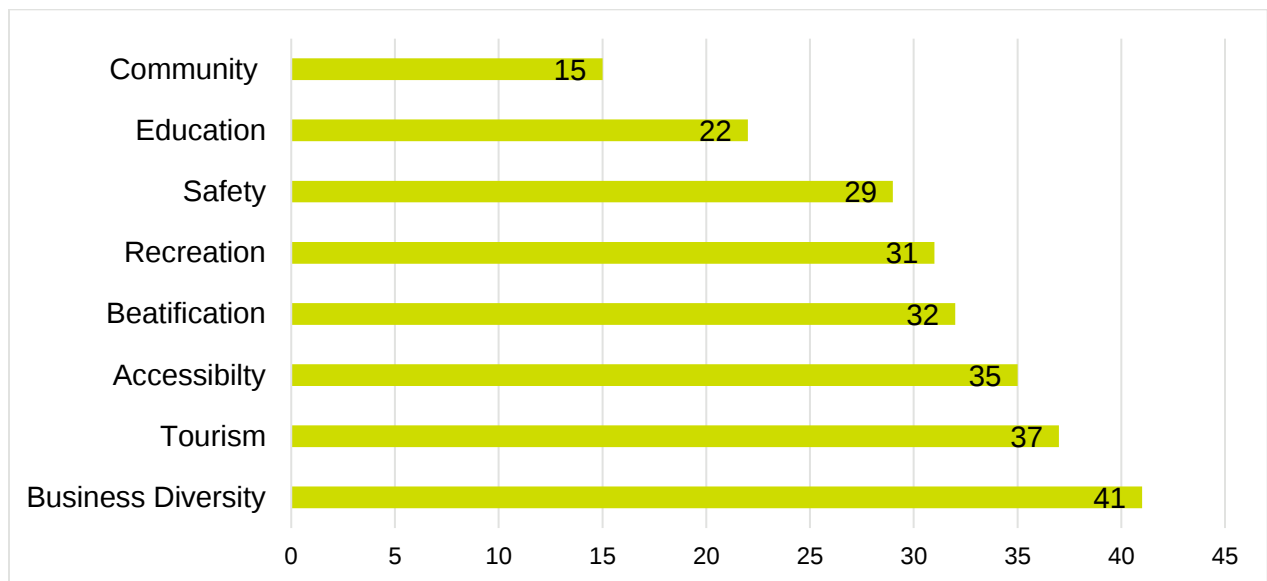
Map 5.3. Condition and Status of Structures.



5.3 Public Input

Survey questions that affected the village's future land use goals are displayed below. Business diversity was the most important value to survey respondents, followed by tourism and accessibility.

Figure 5.4. Most Important Community Values (Community Survey 2018).



Community - Knowing neighbors, friendliness, and awareness of people and activity

Education – High-quality public-school options for K-12 students

Safety – Reducing potential hazards and low crime rate

Recreation – Spaces and programs to encourage activities for citizens and visitors

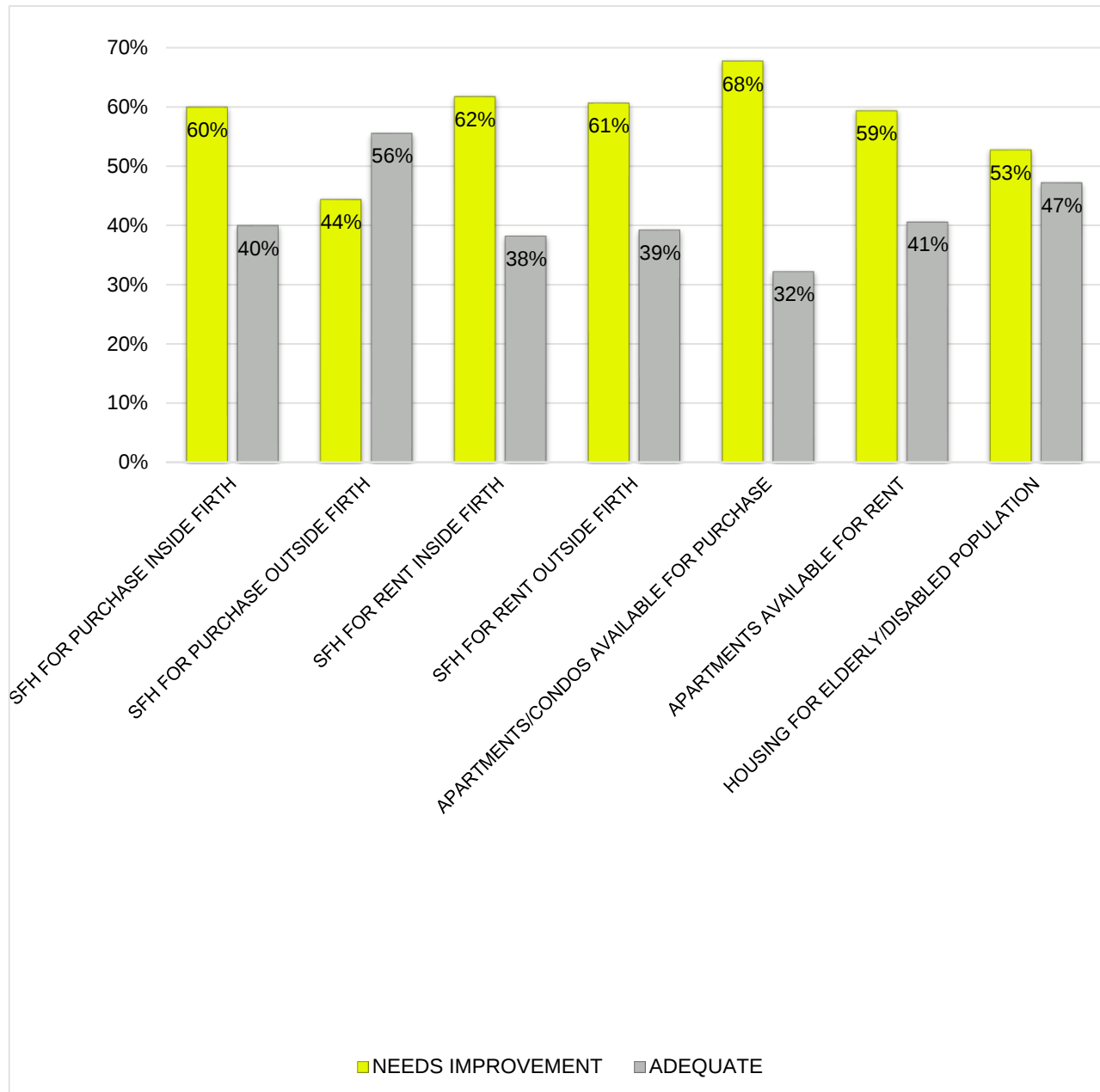
Beatification – Improving the exterior appearance of buildings, sidewalks, and public spaces

Accessibility – Location and proximity to resources while staying in a rural setting

Tourism – Make visitors aware of and want to visit Firth

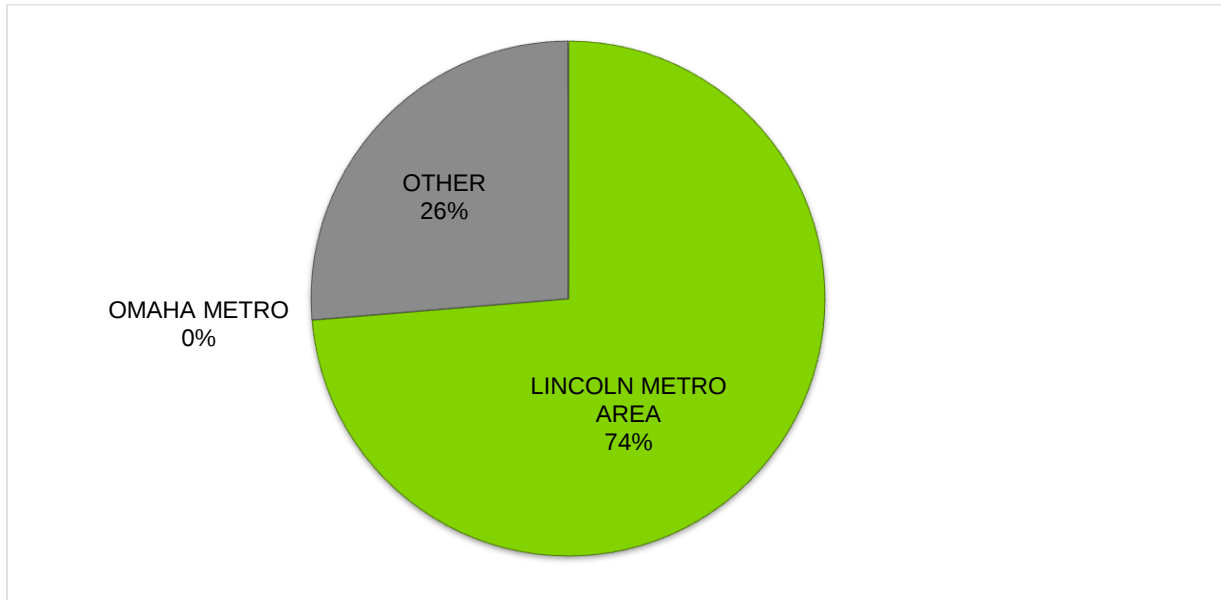
Business Diversity – Various and additional business to increase activity

Figure 5.5. Housing Options (Community Survey 2018).



At least 60 percent of respondents felt that housing choices inside Firth needed improvement; those housing types in need of improvement ranged from single-family homes (SFH) for purchase, apartments for rent, and SFH for rent.

Figure 5.6. Commuting Destinations (Community Survey 2018).



When asked what quality-of-life factors were the most important, respondents ranked safety, health, business opportunities, relationships, and food security as the top five most valuable. Respondents were then asked to rank their current level of satisfaction with the same quality of life aspects in Firth, they rated business opportunities, food security, and health in the bottom five. The full written survey is included In Appendix B of this plan. Each quality-of-life aspect was defined within the survey question.

Figure 5.7. Quality of Life (Community Survey 2018).

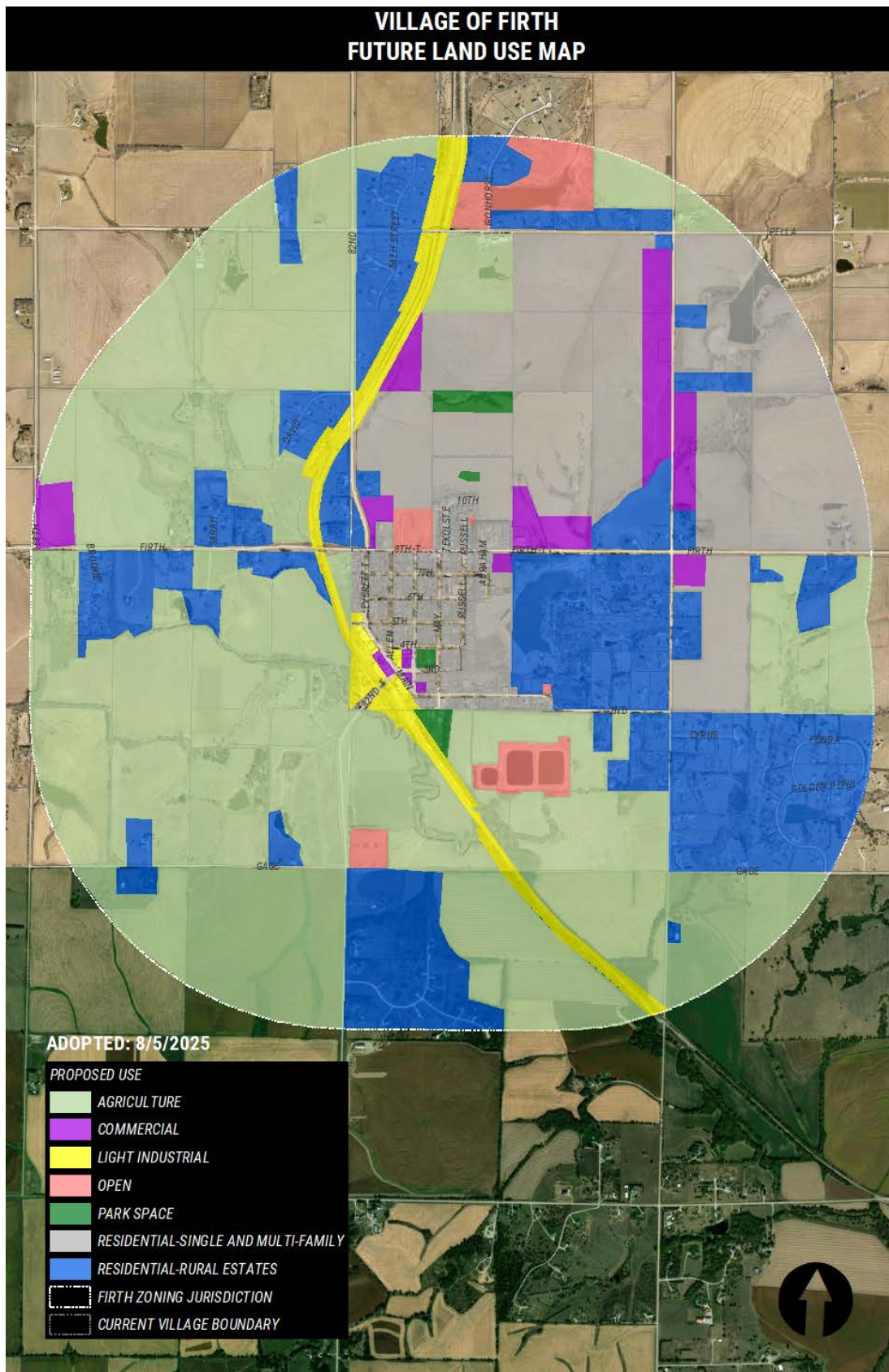
QUALITY-OF-LIFE FACTORS COMPARISON (MOST IMPORTANT TO LEAST IMPORTANT)	
MOST IMPORTANT PERSONALLY	LEVEL OF SATISFACTION IN FIRTH
SAFETY	RELIGION
HEALTH	SAFETY
BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES	RELATIONSHIPS
RELATIONSHIPS	EDUCATION
FOOD SECURITY	COMMUNITY
COMMUNITY	BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES
WEALTH	WEALTH
RELIGION	FOOD SECURITY
EDUCATION	HEALTH

5.4 Future Land Use Map

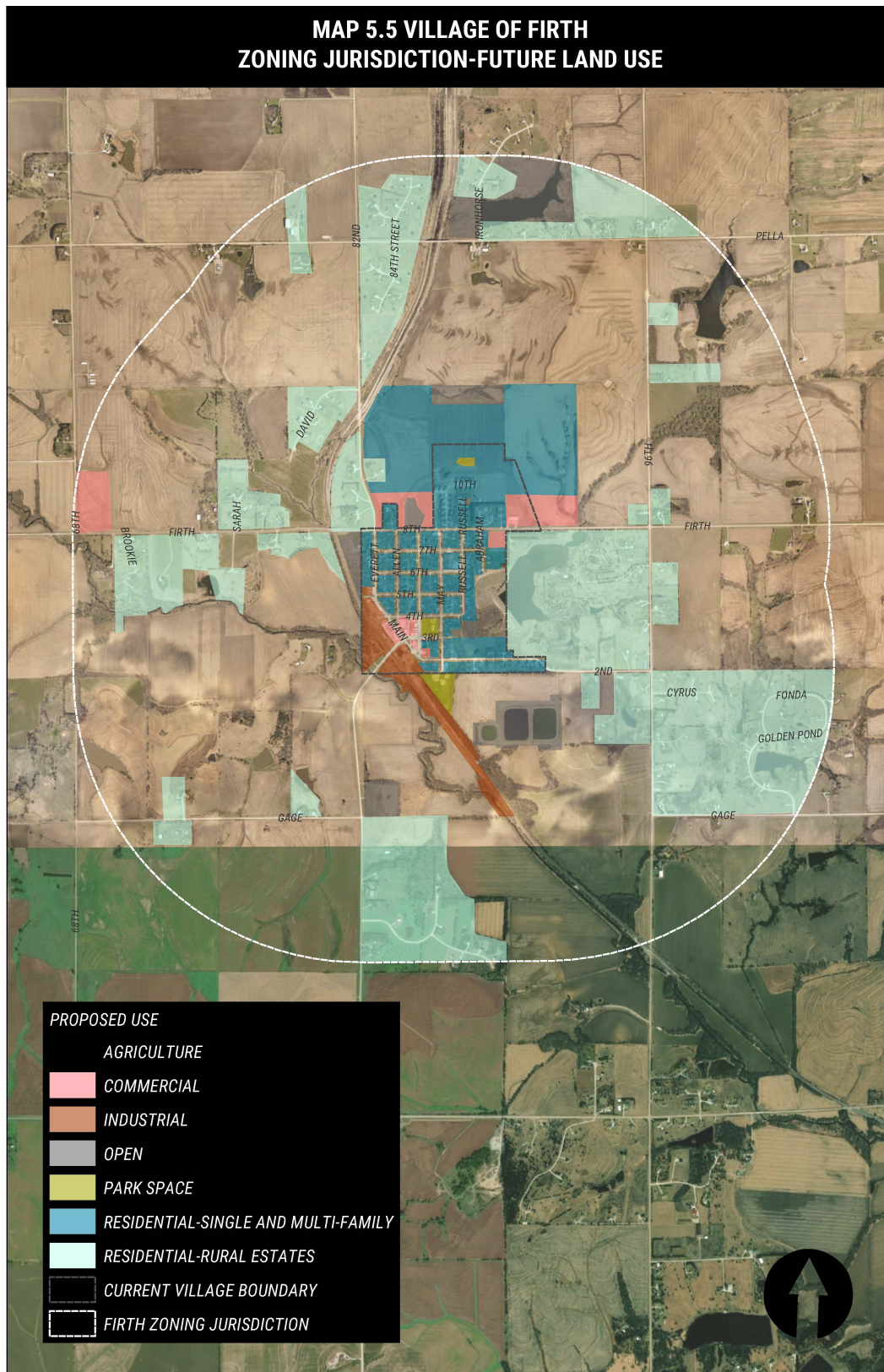
Based upon the existing land use inventory, projected residential growth, and the input provided by current residents, a proposed future land use (FLU) map was drafted. The proposed FLU map was presented to the public during an all-day open house event held at the Firth Community Center on April 9, 2019. Members of the public viewed the proposed FLU map and were invited to ask questions and provide feedback.

Input provided from the general public during the day was reviewed and discussed at a joint meeting between the Firth Planning Commission and the village board. At the end of that that joint session, the planning commission voted to recommend the proposed FLU map and the board subsequently voted to approve the proposed FLU map. That approved version of the FLU map (including the ETJ) is provided on the following pages.

Map 5.4. Firth Village Future Land Use Map.



Map 5.5. Firth 1-Mile Future Land Use Map.



5.5 Future Land Uses – Subuses

The FLU map is divided into primary categories. Acceptable subuses for each category is listed below.

Agriculture

Village of Firth (Utility, Storage, Landfill, Recycling)

Industrial

Village of Firth Utilities (Utility, Storage, Landfill, Recycling)

Commercial

Civic Uses (Religious, Educational)

Village of Firth (Office, Library, Community Center)

Residential

Civic Uses (Religious, Educational)

Village of Firth (Office, Library, Community Center, Park Space)

5.6 Rationale Behind the Proposed FLU Map

Increased Commercial Spaces

The proposed FLU map intends to attract small-scale commercial services that will complement Firth's downtown business district while also meeting the daily needs of residents living in Firth. Survey respondents and interview participants both made similar requests for increased access to service providers such as medical and retail establishments that carry daily grocery and household items. In addition to ensuring that downtown space remains open to commercial businesses, some spots along Firth Road have also been identified that can serve the daily traffic headed to Norris schools or work in Lincoln.

Adjacent Residential Development

The anticipated growth and desire for additional housing options has been consistently communicated throughout the planning process. The type of residential development desired is varied, from large-lot, high-end single-family homes; to small-lot workforce, owner-occupied housing; to small homes, town homes, and apartments for rent. In order to ensure that the Village of Firth can grow and offer a variety of housing choices, all future residential development within the ETJ should take place adjacent to the village and be annexed and served by village facilities. The existing neighborhoods south of Firth Road should continue to be maintained as residential neighborhoods primarily occupied by single-family homes. The residential growth north of Firth Road should include a variety of lot sizes and housing types.

5.7 Amendments to the Future Land Use Map

Should a compelling case be made to change a proposed future use, the Firth Village Board of Trustees may consider and approve amendments to this plan only after receiving a written report from the planning commission and holding a public hearing.

The planning commission will also hold a public hearing before submitting a written report to the village board (NRS 19-901).

5.8 Annexation

“The Village of Firth Board of Trustees may choose to include within the corporate limits any adjacent lands that are urban or suburban in character,” (NRS 17-405).

The village chairperson and board of trustees will only add adjacent lands as defined by, NRS 17-405.02: *“lands, lots, tracts, streets, or highways shall be deemed contiguous although a stream, roadway, embankment, strip, or parcel of land not more than five hundred feet wide lies between such lands, lots, tracts, streets, or highways and the corporate limits of a village.”*

“The village chairperson and board of trustees will only add adjacent lands after ensuring that, within one year from the time of addition, those inhabitants of the adjacent lands are able to receive the same benefits and be subject to the same regulations as those inhabitants within the village,” (NRS 17-405.04).

In accordance with benefits and regulations are defined as, *“police, fire, snow removal, and water service... such inhabitants shall be subject to the ordinances and regulations of such city or village”* (NRS 17-405.04).

REFERENCE LIST

1. ASC 2017 (American Community Survey), United States Census Bureau Data
2. Community Survey 2018, conducted as part of the Firth Housing Market Study and Comprehensive Plan in 2018 by Center for Entrepreneurship and Rural Development, University Nebraska Kearney.
3. Nebraska Department of Revenue 2018

APPENDIX A

South 68th Street Operations and Safety Study

APPENDIX B

Public Involvement and the Planning Process

(RESOLUTION)

FIRTH COMPRENSIVE PLAN 2019-2030

Firth, Nebraska; 2019

July 2019

Olsson Project No. 018-2559